

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING REPORT**

**Establishment of
Dahomey
National Wildlife Refuge
Bolivar County, Mississippi**

APPROVAL

memorandum

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Correspondence

DATE: July 1, 1991

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Chief, Project Development Branch, FWS, Atlanta, GA

SUBJECT: Project Development Planning Report, Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

TO: Refuge Manager, Steve Gard
Thru: Associate Manager, FWS, Atlanta, GA (RF-II)

MS Wetland

JUL 10 '91

Mgmt. Dist.

The subject report includes copies of all of the planning documentation required for the establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County, Mississippi. The report documents compliance with all applicable environmental regulations and Service planning guidance as detailed in 2 REM 2. The original documents will be retained on file in the Project Development Branch, Division of Realty. A copy of the report is attached and should be retained in the refuge file. Should additional copies of the report be required, please contact me.



Charles R. Danner

Attachment

(UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
memorandum

DATE: March 28, 1989

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Regional Director, FWS, Atlanta, GA (ARW)

SUBJECT: Preliminary Project Proposal - Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge,
Bolivar County, Mississippi

TO: Director, FWS, Washington, DC (ARW)

Your approval of this project is appreciated. However, I am concerned about future funding for the project based on your comments qualifying that approval. I believe a closer review of the preliminary project proposal would reveal its true merits. To that end, I submit the following information for your consideration:

This project ranks fifth on our Regional migratory bird project list and ahead of such proposals as Little Pecan Island, Latanier Bayou, Lake Ophelia refuge, Tallahatchie River, Reelfoot refuge, Cache refuge, and others. One real problem with the Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS) process is its inability to distinguish between the waterfowl management of larger refuges and this Region's strategy of smaller geographically placed refuges to meet the birds habitat requirements.

Contrary to the statement about this proposal lacking wetlands, this area by all standards is a wetland. It consists of bottomland hardwoods and converted wetlands which are now poor, often flooded agriculture lands. These lands are characterized by having a poor drainage system with extensive hydric soils. Most of this land has a 1- to 3-year flood frequency.

These lands are ideal for waterfowl management practices, such as greentree reservoirs, moist soil, and water level management. Similar characteristics are found on all lands that have been recommended and approved for purchase in the Lower Mississippi Valley. This is essential for wintering waterfowl and represents some of the best management practices for waterfowl.

While many major wildlife values seem to center around species that are a State's priority, these species are common to all bottomland hardwood habitat. Under proper waterfowl management, these lands are also very beneficial to large numbers of waterfowl. This proposal contains 8,500 acres of bottomland hardwoods representing the largest remaining bottomland forest in the Upper Mississippi Delta outside of the Mississippi River main

line levees in the State of Mississippi. This adds to the critical nature of the need for acquisition. With the proper application of wetland management practices, waterfowl usage is expected to be at the highest level. In fact, as mentioned earlier, it is identified as one of the top sites in the Mississippi Delta.

Because of its high value for waterfowl, and since this is Service responsibility, I would not agree that this is a State priority versus a Federal management opportunity. There is a ground swell of support for a national wildlife refuge in this community coupled with congressional support. We plan to proceed with the decision document.



cc:

ARW-RE (Attn: Chuck Danner)

Wildlife Management Biologist, FWS, Jackson, MS

Regional Joint Venture Coordinator, FWS, Vicksburg, MS



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR.
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

MAR 10 1989

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/RE/F9-246

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Atlanta, Georgia

From: Director

Subject: Preliminary Project Proposal - Dahomey National
Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County, Mississippi

I approve the subject proposal; however, because of this project's relatively low Land Acquisition Priority System rank and its apparent lack of existing wetlands and waterfowl use, compared to other areas in the Mississippi River Delta, there is little likelihood of it receiving funding in the foreseeable future.

You should fully explore the possibility of the area being preserved and managed by the State of Mississippi or a nongovernmental conservation organization since the area's wildlife resources may more appropriately be a State, rather than Federal, priority.

POLICY ACT DOCUMENTS

COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENTS

memorandum

DATE: January 10, 1989
REPLY TO: Regional Director, FWS, Atlanta, GA (ARW/RE)
ATTN OF:
SUBJECT: Preliminary Project Proposal - Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge
TO: Director, FWS, Washington, D.C. (RE)

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Reports

The Preliminary Project Proposal (PPP) for Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County, Mississippi, is attached for your review. We recommend the establishment of this refuge as proposed in the PPP, and will proceed with the detailed planning pending your approval. If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please contact Patricia Podriznik at FTS 242-3543.



Attachment

Approved:

DIRECTOR

DATE

Preliminary Project Proposal
Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge
Bolivar County, Mississippi

Prepared by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia
January 1989

Introduction

Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge is being proposed to preserve and manage wintering and migrating habitat for mallards, pintails, and wood ducks, and production habitat for wood ducks to meet the habitat goals presented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Establishment of the refuge and proper management would provide excellent wintering waterfowl habitat and a needed waterfowl refuge in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

The Dahomey proposal has been identified by the Mississippi Component of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture as one of the four top acquisition sites in the Mississippi Delta.

Location and Size

The proposed refuge would consist of approximately 12,000 acres. The area is located in Bolivar County, Mississippi, approximately 20 miles northeast of Greenville and 10 miles southwest of Cleveland (figure 1). The nearest town is Benoit (5 miles to the southwest) and the Mississippi River is about 15 miles west of the proposal. Mathews Brake National Wildlife Refuge is 45 miles southeast and the proposed Tallahatchie River National Wildlife Refuge is 50 miles east.

Description of Habitat

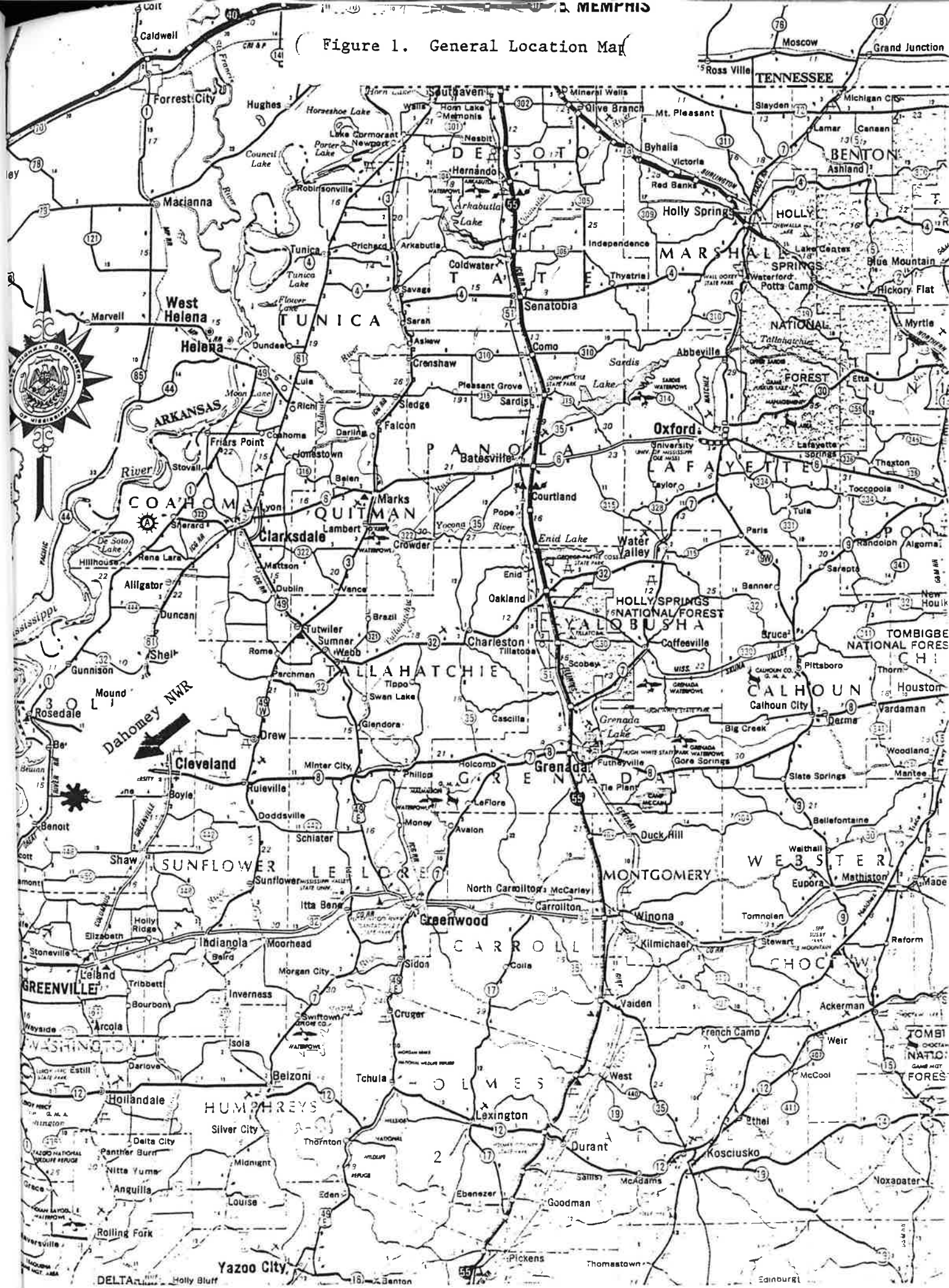
The proposal contains 8,500 acres of bottomland hardwood habitat which constitutes the largest remaining bottomland forest in the upper Mississippi Delta, outside of the Mississippi River main line levees. Primary overstory species are Nuttall oak, water oak, willow oak, and overcup oak. Green ash, bitter pecan, cherrybark oak, bald cypress, hackberry, red maple, rock elm, persimmon, sweetgum, black willow, and American elm are other common species. All of the woodlands have been cutover since the late 1960's, however, species composition is diverse. Interspersed among the bottomland hardwoods are beaver ponds, wooded sloughs, a shrub swamp, and croplands.

The shrub swamp is about 100 acres in size and is vegetated primarily by buttonbush, smartweed, and water primrose. This area can be considered as permanent water since it serves as a reservoir for rice field dewatering during the dry summer months. During other times of the year rainfall is sufficient to maintain shallow water in the swamp.

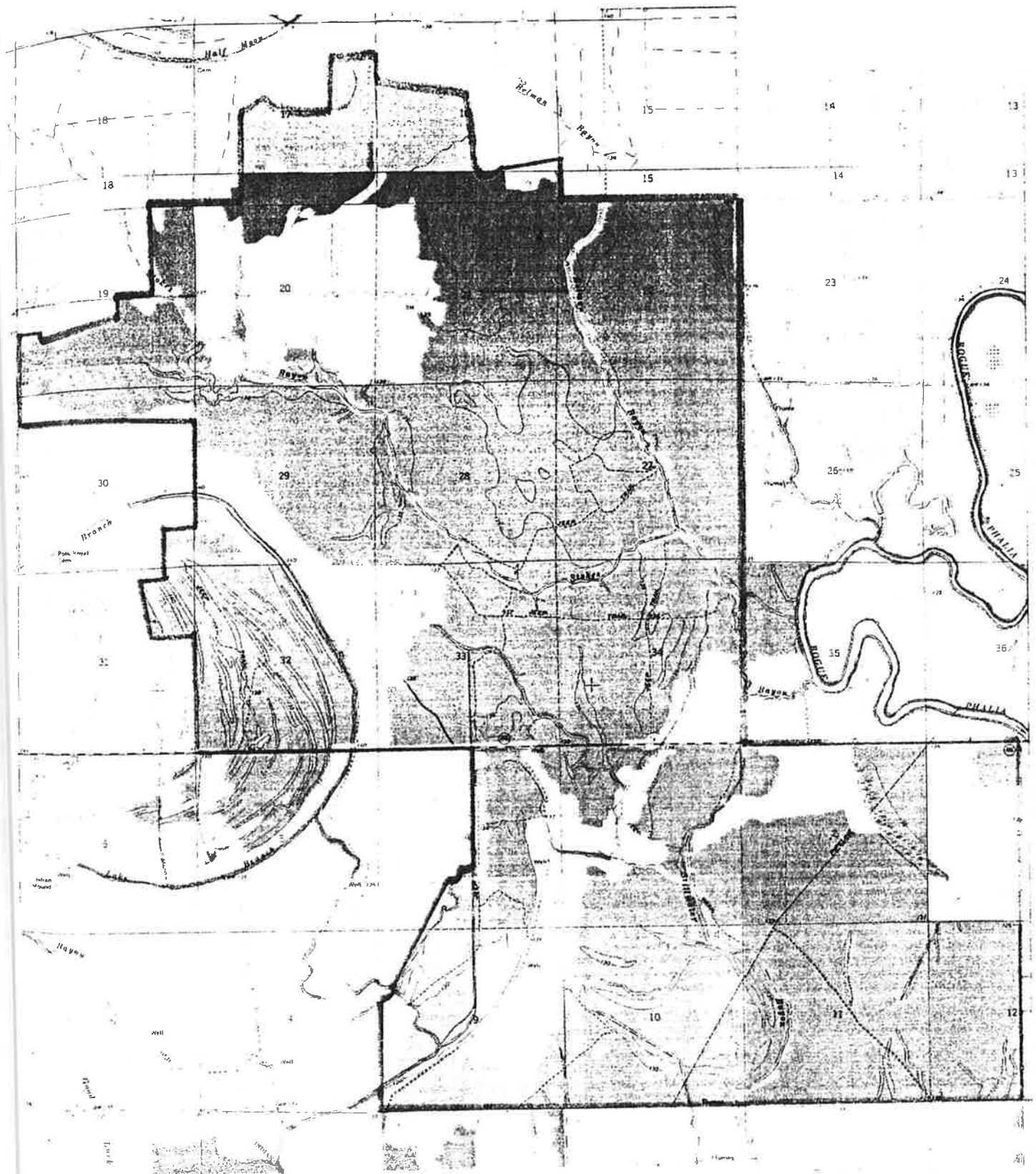
There are 1,480 acres of cropland on the interior of the bottomland hardwood tract. These fields are managed on a rice/soybean rotation. The remaining property within the selection area is similar cropland on the periphery of the woodlands.

The Bogue Phalia River, which borders the proposal on the east, is the major drainage system in the area. Belman Bayou, Bayou Stokes, Stillwater Bayou, and Christmas Lake Branch traverse the proposal and are tributaries of the Bogue Phalia (figure 2). When the Bogue Phalia cannot drain into the Sunflower River due to high water, the previously mentioned tributaries back up and overflow

Figure 1. General Location Map



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throughout the proposal. The low areas within the proposal (130 feet msl and below) are within the 1-3 year flood frequency.

Bolivar County has a humid, warm temperature, continental climate characteristic of the southeastern United States. Rainfall average is almost 50 inches and temperatures average 64 degrees on a year-round basis. Winter temperatures may dip below zero but usually average around 47 degrees.

Most of the soils are hydric in nature. Sharkey clays predominate, but some dundee soils are also present. The topography of Bolivar County is similar to that of the much larger Mississippi River floodplain and it ranges from level in the flat areas of slackwater clays to very gently undulating in the successions of ridges and swales that once bordered the river channel. This relatively flat topography contributes toward slow drainage.

Major Wildlife Values

The 8,500 acres of bottomland hardwood habitat supports a good deer herd, turkeys, squirrels, rabbits, and other typical wildlife species found in this type ecosystem. Bobcat, coyote, mink, beaver, raccoon, and otter are the primary furbearers. This block of woods, which is the largest in this part of the delta, serves as both a temporary home during migration and a permanent home for many species of passerine birds, raptors, wading birds and game birds (i.e., doves and woodcock). The adjoining rice and bean fields offer similar habitat to many species of shore birds, wading birds, and waterfowl.

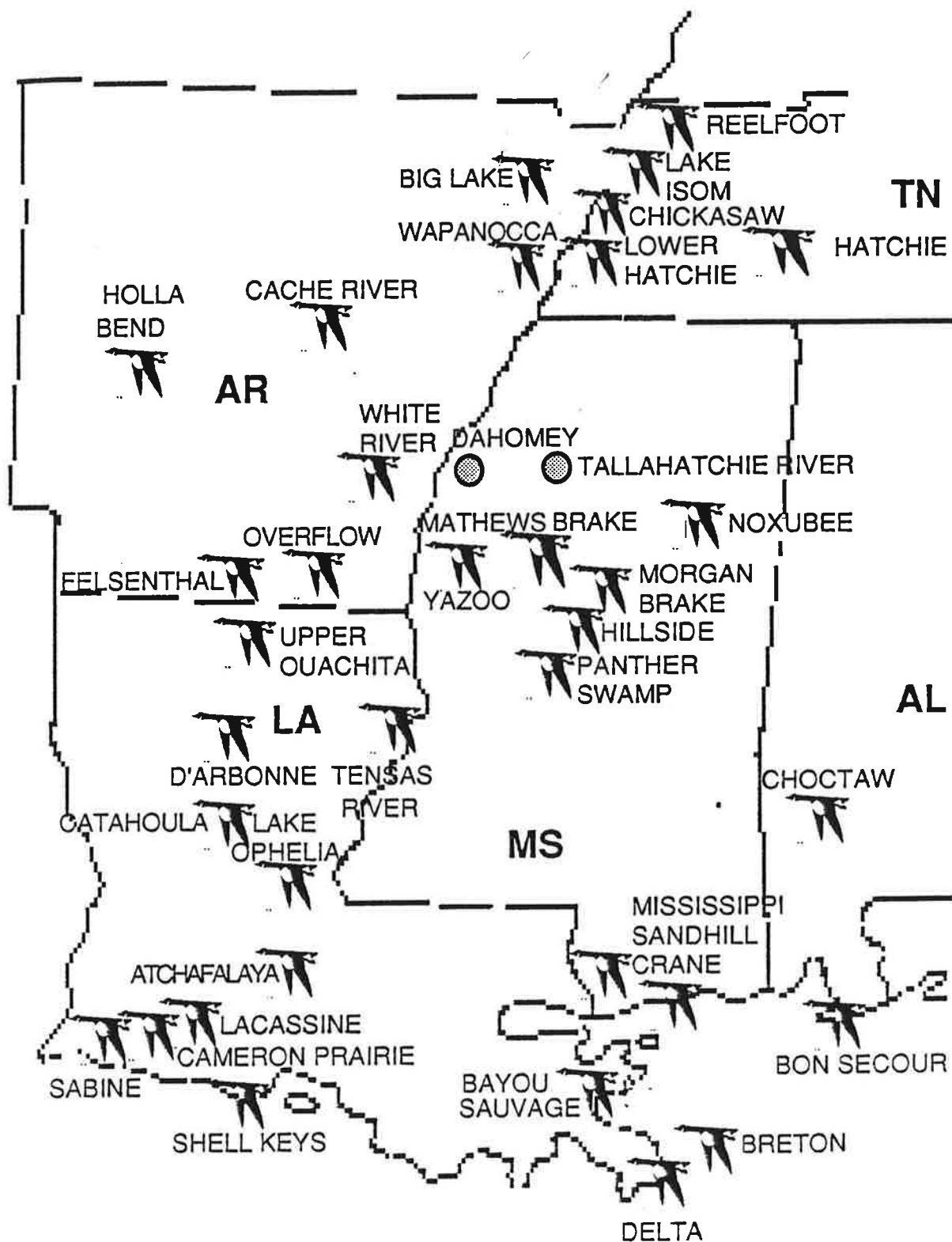
The value of this ecosystem to all forms of wildlife is obvious since it represents an oasis in a sea of agriculture. Its value to the local wildlife interests is also significant.

There are no waterfowl survey data for Dahomey Plantation. In Bolivar County, mid-winter surveys are conducted on the Mississippi River oxbow lakes and area catfish ponds. Currently, there is no waterfowl development on Dahomey and waterfowl use is limited to periods when woodlands and fields hold water from winter rains or backwater flooding. Commercial hunting has never been popular in Bolivar County and most rice fields are not pumped up during winter.

Related Resources

Mathews Brake National Wildlife Refuge is 45 miles southeast, the proposed Tallahatchie River National Wildlife Refuge is 50 miles east, and White River National Wildlife Refuge is 30 miles northwest of the proposal (figure 3). Malmasion Wildlife Management Area (State) is also about 50 miles east. These areas are managed for migratory waterfowl. In addition, the Service is currently doing limited development work on certain Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) inventory properties in Bolivar County. A Wetland Management District, soon to be established in Grenada, Mississippi, will have responsibilities for managing several FmHA tracts in Bolivar County.

Figure 3. Location of proposed Dahomey NWR in relation to other NWR's in Lower Mississippi Valley.



Threats

The primary threat to the proposal is the clearing of the bottomland hardwoods for additional agricultural production. In the late 1960's, portions of the proposals' woodlands were heavily cutover with the intent to convert this land to croplands. This conversion never materialized but the threat is ever present. All such similar areas in the northern delta have been cleared and with the increasing prices for soybeans, land use change will be more attractive.

Another threat to the proposal is aquifer recharge. The water table in this part of the delta experiences a tremendous drain from extensive pumping, Corps projects, and general loss of wetlands. Streams in the area are heavily used for irrigation by rice farmers. This summer, due to the drought, the Natural Resources Department put a closure order on pumping from several of the streams in Bolivar County.

Justification and Funding

Dahomey Plantation has been identified as one of the four top acquisition sites in Mississippi needed to meet the goals of the NAWMP. The Mississippi Delta has experienced wide scale habitat destruction and Dahomey Plantation represents the last remaining woodlands of any significance in the northern delta. The proposed refuge complements existing refuges by filling a geographic void and by providing a stepping stone for the Mississippi Valley Population of Canada geese. Located in Bolivar County, the largest rice producing county in Mississippi, Dahomey is in a position where it can be a cornerstone for several FmHA tracts that we have requested to be transferred to the Service.

Dahomey has excellent waterfowl management potential through greentree reservoir (GTR) development and retention of water in agricultural fields. Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge would be a natural stop off for Canada geese traveling between refuges to the north and Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge. Due to Dahomey's location, in close proximity to the Mississippi River, migratory waterfowl should immediately begin to utilize the refuge as management commences.

The planned refuge has a complex integration of wetlands (forest, agri-wetlands, moist soil) needed to best meet the wintering needs of migrating waterfowl. Water management capability is good. Several deep wells and relift pumps are included within the proposal and interior streams can be controlled to provide additional water sources.

Acquisition funding may be sought under the Migratory Bird Conservation Account. However, funds could also be provided from the Land and Water Conservation Fund under the authority of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (P.L. 99-645).

Ownership and Type of Acquisition

The major landowner within the proposal is the Allen Gray Estate which is managed by a Chicago bank. Dahomey Plantation, which was named for the area of Africa

from where the original Dahomey slaves came, consists of 18,736 acres and is owned by the Gray Estate. Managers of the Gray Estate would sell 9,490 acres of Dahomey Plantation for the refuge and continue to manage their remaining property for rice and soybean production.

There are ten additional ownerships within the selection area, ranging in size from 40 acres to 800 acres. None of these properties are on the interior of the proposal and none are critical for successful refuge management. However, they would provide a more uniform refuge boundary and provide additional cropland which would enhance management options.

Acquisition by donation, partial donation, or purchase of conservation easements will be attempted; however, it is anticipated that fee purchase will be the probable means of acquisition.

There are two large rice field complexes on the south and east sides of the selection area. These areas offer possibilities for the Service's rice field leasing program or Partners for Waterfowl Tomorrow.

Initial and Annual Costs

Estimated acquisition cost is \$800 per acre for a total of \$9.6 million. Acquisition could be over a 5 year period (\$2 million per year) and annual revenue sharing cost is estimated at \$72,000. Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge would be operated as an independent refuge. The following is a proposed staffing pattern and estimated annual Operation and Maintenance.

1 GS-11/4	Manager	\$31,738
1 GS-5/2	Biological Technician	16,263
1 WG-8/5	Equipment Operator	19,356
1 WG-5/5	Farm Equipment Operator	16,600
1 GS-4/1	Secretary	<u>14,067</u>
Direct Salary Costs		\$98,024

Indirect Salary Costs (30% estimated as most employees will be under FERS)		<u>29,407</u>
Total Salary Costs		\$127,431

Non-salary costs	<u>38,229</u>
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Total Operation and Maintenance	\$165,660
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Contaminants and Hazardous Waste

Agricultural runoff could cause minor problems with pesticides and siltation. There are no known land fills or hazardous waste dumps within the selection area.

Public Attitude and Involvement

State wide support for this project will be positive when the proposal is made public, but there may be local opposition because this tract of woods is the only significant wildlife habitat left outside the Mississippi River levee. The woods are presently leased to a local hunting club. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation supports the establishment of this refuge.



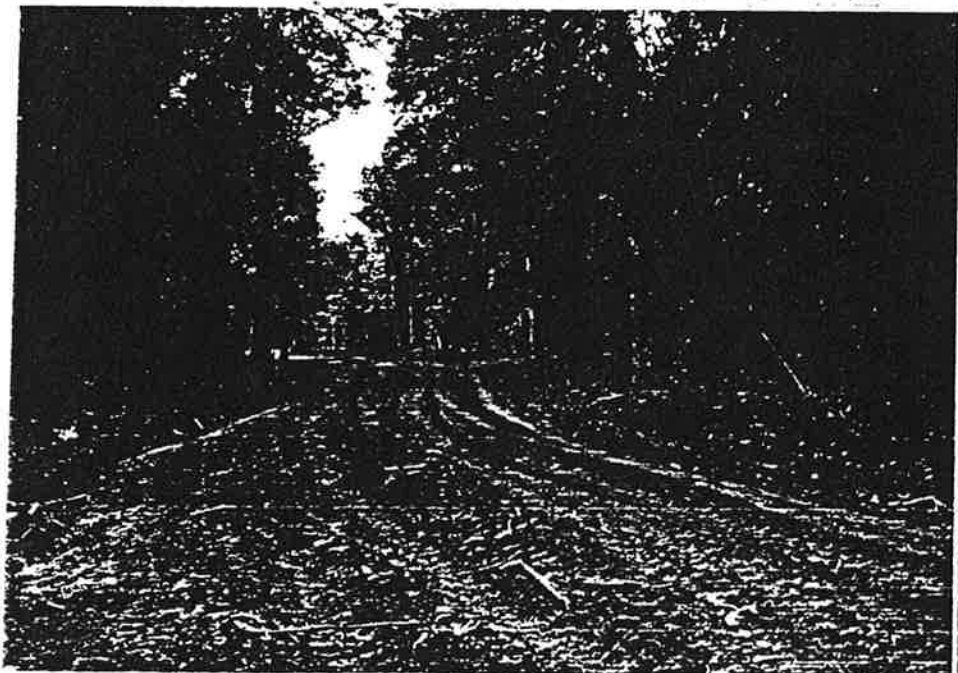
Bottomland Hardwoods



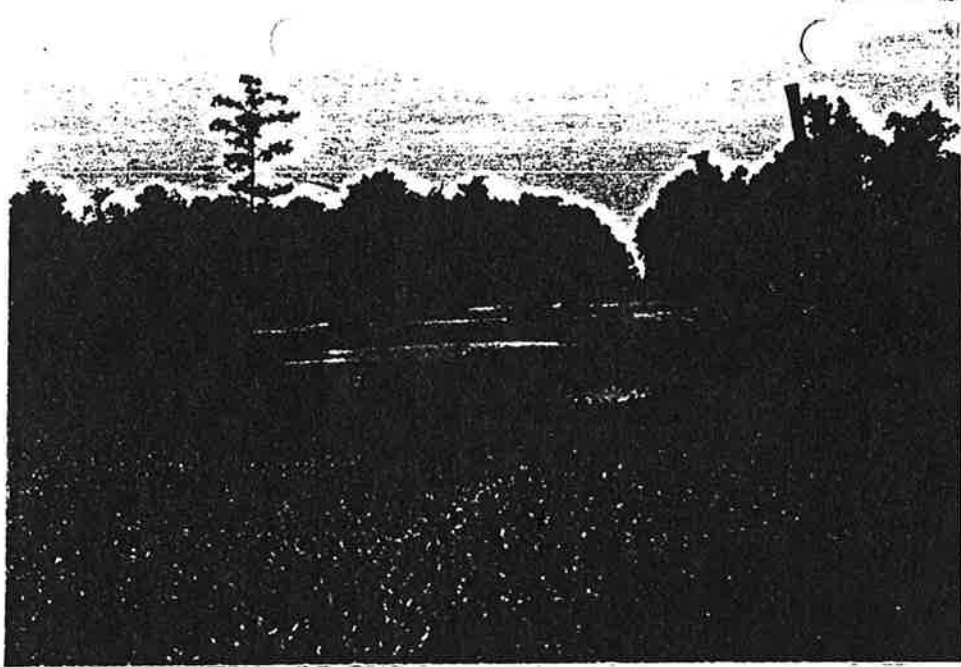
Bottomland Hardwood Mast



Woods Trail



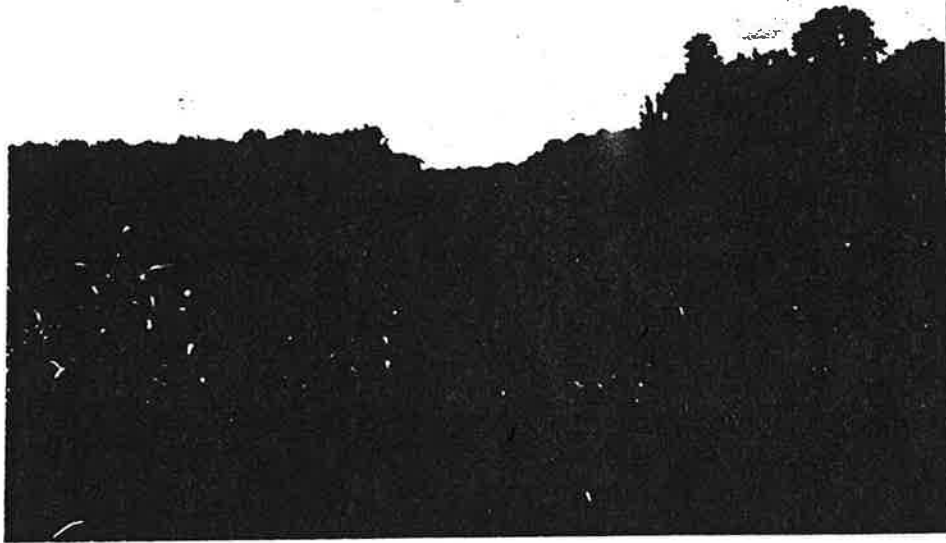
Interior Access Road



Shrub Swamp



Wetland Area



Interior Rice Field



Access Road at South End

I D ACQUISITION PRIORITY SYSTEM ()
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PROJECT FORM

SECTION I: PROJECT SUMMARY
TARGET: MIGRATORY BIRD

DATE: 01/06/89

PROJECT: DAHOMEY

REGION: 4 STATE: MS

LOCATION: Bolivar County, MS, 20 miles northeast of Greenville and 15 miles east of the Mississippi River

ADMINISTERING REFUGE:

PURPOSE OF ACQUISITION: To insure the protection of wintering and production habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl

ACREAGE WHEN COMPLETED: 12,000 IFWS NUMBER:

DATE OF PROJECT APPROVAL: / /

PRINCIPAL PROJECT AUTHORITIES:

—	ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
—	MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING AND CONSERVATION STAMP ACT
<u>X</u>	MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACT
—	FISH AND WILDLIFE ACT
—	FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT
—	RECREATION USE OF CONSERVATION AREAS ACT
<u>X</u>	EMERGENCY WETLANDS RESOURCES ACT (proposed)
—	ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT
—	SPECIAL LEGISLATION: PUBLIC LAW of / /
	(citation) (date)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The subject acquisition is being proposed as wintering habitat for mallards, pintails, and wood ducks, and production habitat for wood ducks to meet habitat goals established in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. These lands are considered to be one of the top four acquisition priorities in the Mississippi Delta by the Mississippi Component of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture. Establishment of the Dahomey NWR would preserve excellent wintering waterfowl habitat and establish a needed waterfowl refuge in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

1() ACQUISITION PRIORITY SYSTEM ()
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PROJECT FORM

SECTION I: PROJECT SUMMARY

DATE: 01/06/89

ACQUISITION STATUS:

	OWNERSHIPS	ACRES	COST(*1)
Acquired through FY			
Planned for Current FY			
Planned for next FY			
Planned for FY			
Planned for FY			
Planned for FY			
Remaining			
TOTAL			

*1/ Includes incidental acquisition costs

LAND ACQUISITION PRIORITY SYSTEM
3. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PROJECT FORM

DATE: 01/06/89

SECTION II: MIGRATORY BIRD TARGET INFORMATION

PROJECT: DAHOMEY

REGION: 4

LOCATION: Bolivar County, MS, 20 miles northeast of Greenville and 15 miles east of the Mississippi River

NUMBER OF ACRES: 12,000

10-YEAR WHAR CATEGORY (1-12): 3

SPECIES/ POPULATION/1	SEASONAL HABITAT/2	HABITAT IMPORT./3	PROJECT CONT./4	HABITAT PRIORITY	SPECIES PRIORITY	SCORE
MALL	W,MI	1	A	1	1	1.1
PINT	W,MI	2	B	3	1	3.1
WODU	B,W,MI	2	B	3	5	3.5

JUSTIFICATION FOR HABITAT RANKINGS:

The Dahomey NWR proposal is a key element of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture/North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The Mississippi Delta is an integral part of the Mississippi flyway and, as such, serves a critical function as wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. Seasonal flooding, habitat diversity, and abundant food sources characterize this proposed land acquisition. Wintering habitat in the Lower Mississippi River Delta has been reduced primarily as a result of federal water development/flood control projects that have precipitated the conversion of natural wetlands to high risk agricultural lands.

IMPORTANCE TO MIGRATORY BIRDS NOT LISTED ABOVE:

These lands provide wintering habitat for the American Woodcock. Migratory mourning doves can be found in large concentrations in the cleared lands. Shorebirds and wading birds are numerous along depressional areas and swamps. Raptors are common. Endangered species which frequent the proposed NWR lands include the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle.

COMPLETED BY: MIKE DAWSON ARW/RE (PERSON/OFFICE) DATE: 12/16/88

1/ Use Name Abbreviations given in Figure 6.

2/ SEASONAL HABITAT= B-breeding; W-wintering; MI-migration MO-molting.

If a project provides more than 1 seasonal habitat for a species score the Habitat Priority for the best habitat and list it first.

3/ HABITAT IMPORTANCE - 1, 2, OR 3

4/ PROJECT CONTRIBUTION - A, B, OR C

D ACQUISITION PRIORITY SYSTEM
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PROJECT FORM

SECTION III: PROJECT COMMON FACTORS

DATE: 01/06/89

PROJECT: DAHOMEY

REGION: 4

TARGET: MIGRATORY BIRD

1. CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL SERVICE GOALS - check other Service Goals that are supported by the project [35%]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Endangered Species
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife Goals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Habitat Goals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fishery Goals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Goals of North American Waterfowl Management Plan

* supported by Target selection - only 1 (# checked/4) x 35 = SCORE 17.5

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed land acquisition provides wintering habitat for significant numbers of the American Woodcock. Mourning dove are found in large concentrations. Raptor utilization of these lands is high.

2. DEGREE OF THREAT (Enter HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW for each threat. [25%]

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	<u>LOW</u>	
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	<u>LOW</u>	
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	<u>HIGH</u>	
OIL, GAS, MINERAL DEVELOPMENT	<u>LOW</u>	HIGH -impacts >50% of project
ILLEGAL HUNTING/TAKING	<u>MEDIUM</u>	MEDIUM-impacts 25-50% of project
CONTROL OF WATER RIGHTS	<u>MEDIUM</u>	LOW -impacts <25% of project
PUBLIC USE INTERFERENCE	<u>LOW</u>	
OTHER:		

(((# HIGH x 3)+(# MEDIUM x 2)+(# LOW x 1))/24) x 25 = SCORE 11.5

JUSTIFICATION:

Intense pressure exists to convert waterfowl habitat to agricultural use which would shorten flooding frequency and duration. Those lands now wooded are in imminent danger of being cleared for agricultural purposes. Illegal hunting is difficult to control without the aggressive intervention of either Mississippi or federal law enforcement agents.

ACQUISITION PRIORITY SYSTEM
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PROJECT FORM

3. PUBLIC USE [10%]

- ☐ Project is within 50 miles of a Metropolitan Statistical Area
☐ Project is within 50 miles of a tourist area receiving more than
100,000 visitors per year

- ☐ both choices marked (10 pts.)
☐ either choice marked (5 pts.)
☒ neither choice marked (0 pts.)

SCORE 0.0

JUSTIFICATION:

SUBTOTAL (70%) 29.0

4. SCORE PLUS DIRECTOR RANKING [30%]

SCORE

TOTAL SCORE

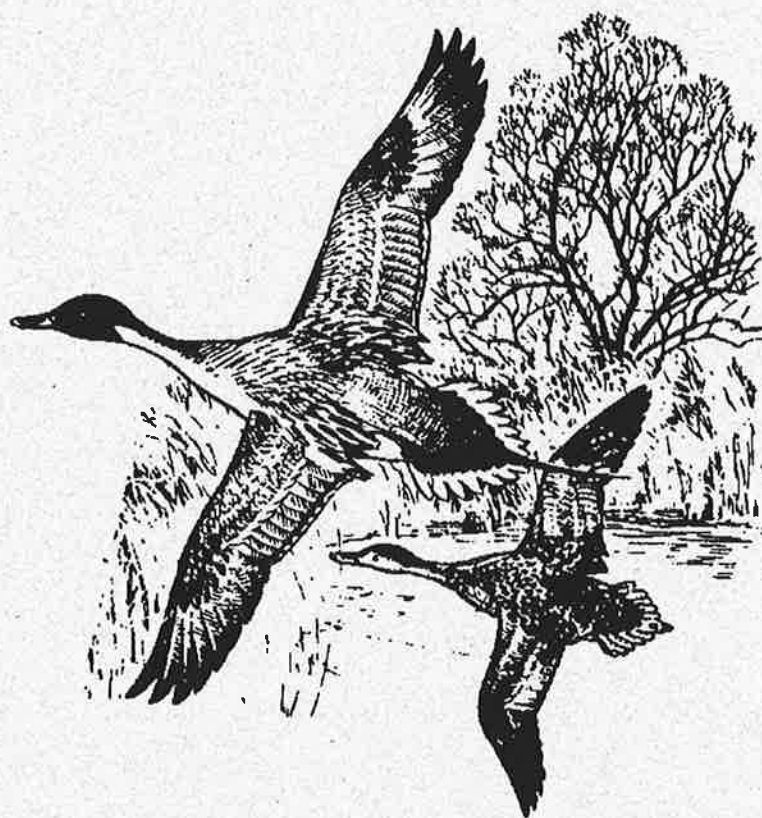
COMPLETED BY: Mike Dawson ARW/RE (PERSON/OFFICE)

DATE: 12/16/88

Final Environmental Assessment and Land Protection Plan

Proposed Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

Bolivar County, Mississippi



United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Region





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

75 SPRING STREET, S.W.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

30303



To: Interested recipients of the Final Environmental Assessment for Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in Bolivar County, Mississippi.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to provide you with a copy of the final Environmental Assessment for the establishment of the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in Bolivar County, Mississippi. The assessment describes a proposal by the Service to preserve and manage approximately 11,600 acres of wintering waterfowl habitat. The major species are mallards, pintails, blue- and green-winged teal, and wood ducks (both wintering and breeding habitat). Actions described will help meet the habitat goals presented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The proposed area is one of five priority sites identified for protection in Mississippi. Approximately 8,500 acres are bottomland hardwoods.

The proposal was developed by the Service in coordination with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; and the Mississippi Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. In the assessment, three alternatives and their potential impact on the environment are evaluated. The Service believes the preferred alternative, Acquisition and Management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will maximize high habitat values for wildlife, particularly wintering waterfowl.

Additional copies of the assessment can be obtained free of charge on request to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Refuges and Wildlife, 75 Spring Street, SW., Room 1240, Atlanta, Georgia 30303. Your interest and support for preserving the area of the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge are appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

James W. Pulliam, Jr.
Regional Director

Enclosure

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for the

Establishment of the

Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

Bolivar County, Mississippi

Based on a review and evaluation of the information contained in the supporting reference below, I have determined that the proposed preservation of approximately 11,600 acres in Bolivar County, Mississippi, for the establishment of the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, the preparation of an environmental impact statement of the proposed action is not required.

Supporting Reference

An environmental assessment has been prepared that summarizes the Service's proposed action and three alternatives (including the preferred alternative), and subsequent environmental consequences for this habitat preservation proposal. The Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation was completed on July 6, 1989.

The assessment and other supporting references are on file in the Office of Refuges and Wildlife, Division of Realty. They are available for public inspection upon request.

May 22, 1991

Date


Regional Director

Final Environmental Assessment

Proposed Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

Bolivar County, Mississippi

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Regional Office
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

May 1991

United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Region



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I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

A. Introduction

The Lower Mississippi River Valley serves as important wintering grounds for thousands of migrating waterfowl in the Mississippi Flyway. One of the major problems confronting waterfowl populations in North America is the loss and degradation of habitat, primarily wetlands.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, the Service) proposes to establish Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in Bolivar County, Mississippi, to preserve and manage waterfowl habitat in the Mississippi Flyway. The Lower Mississippi Valley portion of the flyway is identified as one of nine high priority regions for habitat protection in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This Plan, signed on May 14, 1986, by the United States and Canada, seeks to restore waterfowl populations to the higher levels that were present during the early 1970s. The Plan is being carried out through nine joint venture partnerships from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian Arctic. The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture is one of those partnerships.

The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture has identified the Dahomey proposal as one of the top five acquisition sites in Mississippi. The others include the Panther Swamp, Tallahatchie, St. Catherine Creek, and Morgan Brake National Wildlife Refuges.

The scope of this environmental assessment includes the proposed acquisition of lands and the establishment of a new national wildlife refuge. It is not intended to cover the development and/or implementation of specific programs for the administration and management of the proposed refuge. If the proposed refuge is established and the needed lands are acquired, the Service will develop management plans that will be tailored to the lands and resources under its control. At that time, these refuge management plans will be subjected to further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance requirements.

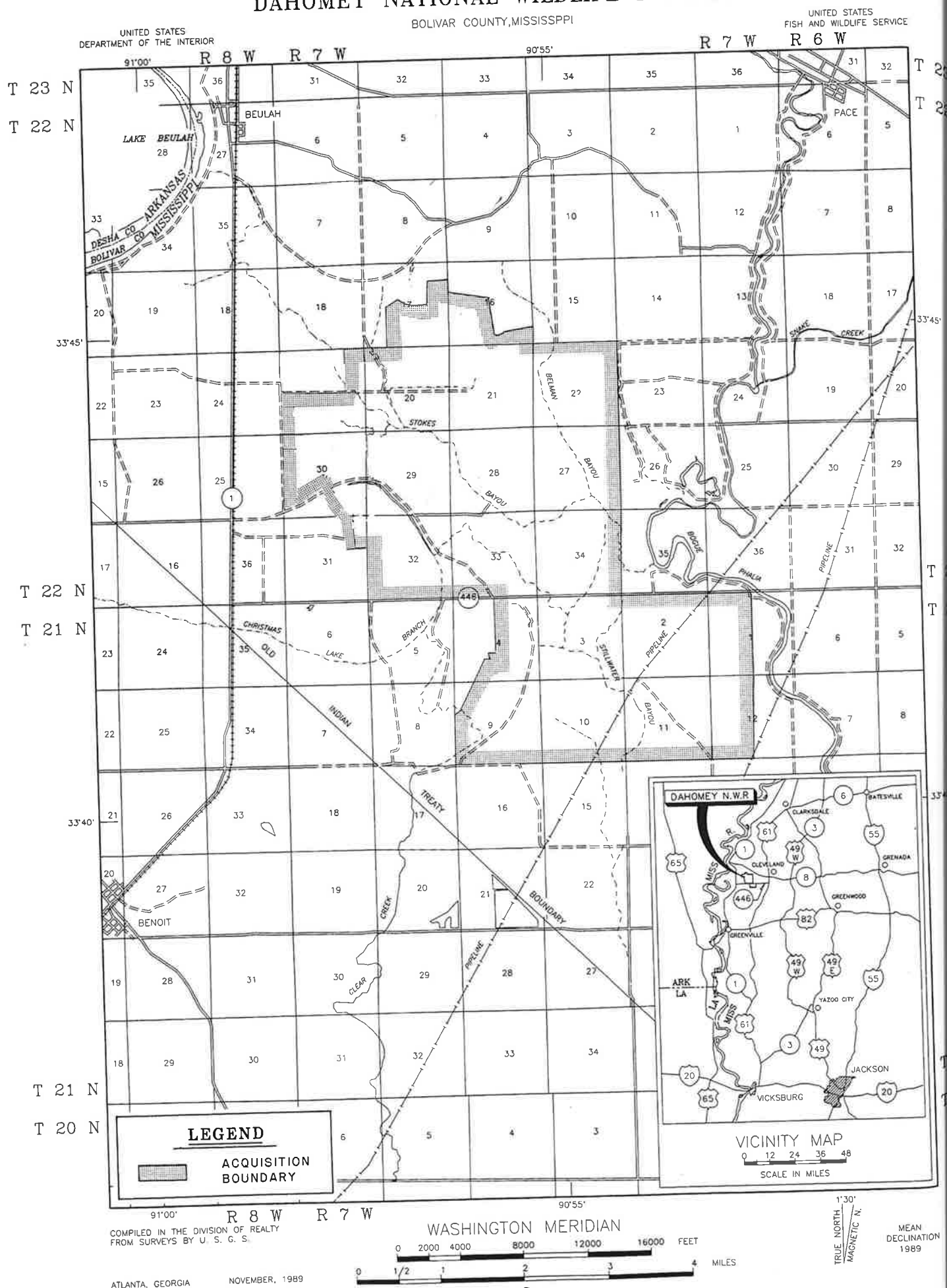
B. Background

The proposed area is located in Bolivar County, Mississippi, and consists of approximately 11,600 acres (Figure 1). It is approximately 20 miles northeast of Greenville and 10 miles southwest of Cleveland. The nearest town is Benoit, 5 miles to the southwest. The Mississippi River is 8 miles northwest. Mathews Brake National Wildlife Refuge is 45 miles southeast, and Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge is 50 miles east (Figure 2).

The area's habitat consists of bottomland hardwoods and cleared lands, shrub swamps, and fallow fields. Bottomland hardwoods account for approximately 8,500 acres. Most of the area has a three-year flood frequency. Flooding provides naturally favorable habitat for large concentrations of wintering waterfowl and other wetland species such as woodcock, snipe, rails, gallinules, and coots. Backwater flooding occurs when the high water stages of the Bogue Phalia cause tributaries such as Belman Bayou, Stokes Bayou, and Stillwater Bayou to overflow.

Figure 1. Proposed acquisition boundary for Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge.

DAHOMEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



**U. S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES**

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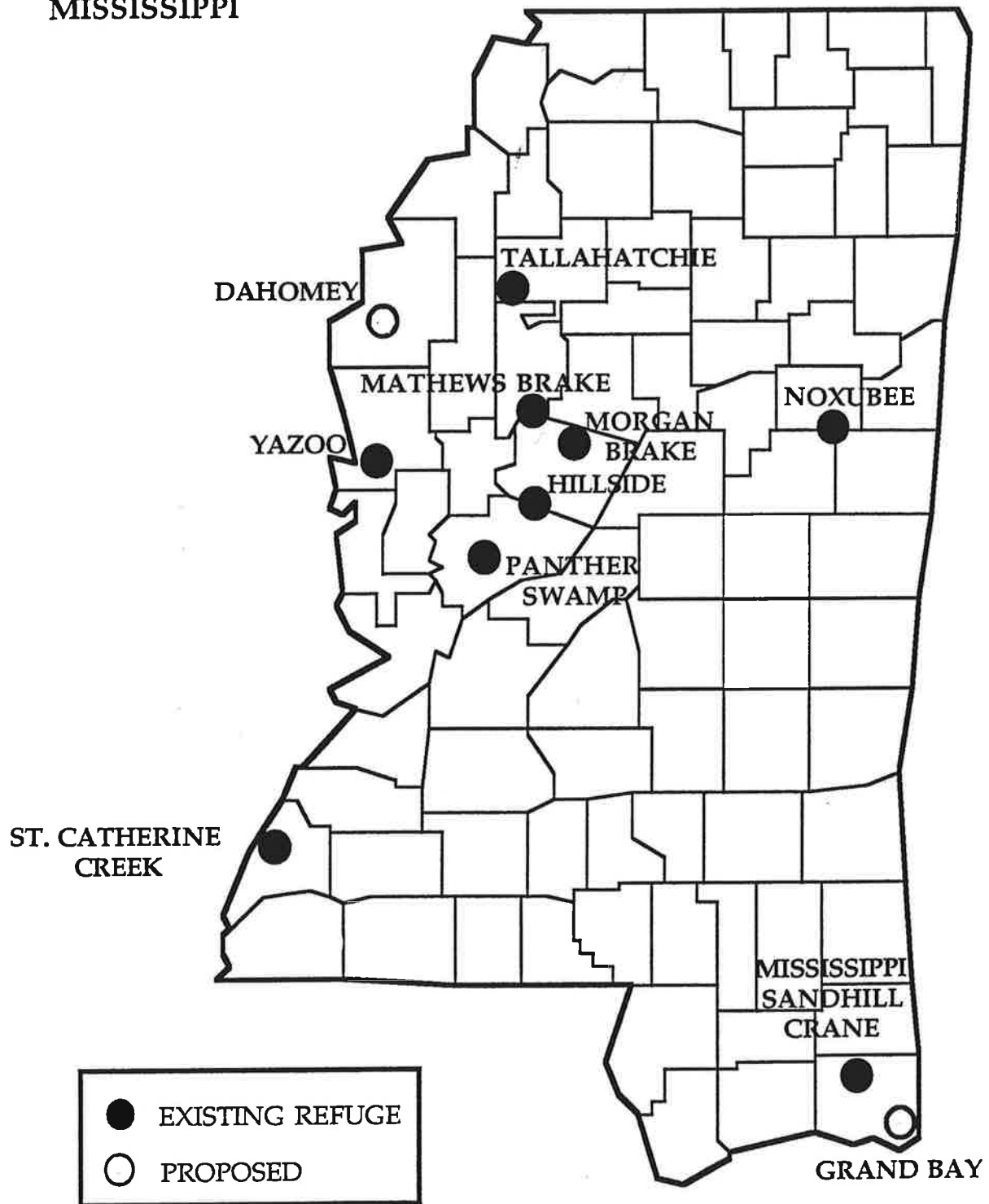


Figure 2. Location of proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in relation to other refuges in Mississippi.

Dahomey Plantation, with its Dahomey woods, is the core of this proposal. This plantation is named for the area of Africa where the original Dahomey slaves were taken. In 1833, the Dahomey site was patented by the U.S. Government into private ownership. By 1888, the Dahomey Plantation was known as the largest individually owned cotton plantation in the world. A settlement, also called Dahomey, grew up around the plantation about 14 miles south of Rosedale. At one time it had a population of about 150. The post office at Dahomey was discontinued in 1937.

The Dahomey Plantation (approximately 18,700 acres) has been recently owned by the Allen Gray Estate. The Nature Conservancy purchased 9,272.5 acres from the Estate in 1990.

Twelve additional tracts lie within the proposed refuge, ranging in size from 40 to 880 acres. These properties are peripheral to the core Nature Conservancy tract and are not as critical for successful refuge management. However, if acquired, they would provide a more uniform refuge boundary. They also contain additional croplands that would enhance the Service's management options.

Two large rice field complexes are also located on the south and east sides of the proposed area. These areas offer potential for the Service's rice field leasing program or Partners for Waterfowl Tomorrow.

Access to Dahomey is excellent. State Highway 446 runs east-west through the center of the property, and county-maintained gravel roads are located at the north and south ends. The interior access roads are well developed.



Interior access road

C. Proposed Action

The Service proposes to protect approximately 11,600 acres of agricultural wetlands and associated habitats in Bolivar County, northwestern Mississippi, for the benefit of migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. The proposed lands would be acquired through cooperative agreements, fee title purchases, donations, and leases. The primary objective of the proposed refuge is to preserve and manage wintering habitat for mallards, pintails, blue- and green-winged teal, and wood ducks. The bottomland hardwoods are also valuable as breeding habitat for wood ducks. Other objectives are to provide habitat for migratory game and nongame birds and to provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreation and environmental education and interpretation.

D. Coordination and Consultation

The Service has closely coordinated the development of this proposal with representatives of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, The Nature Conservancy (especially the Mississippi Chapter), the Allen Gray Estate, and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. Bolivar County officials and planners have also been involved and consulted. Other groups consulted include the Mississippi State Clearinghouse for Federal Programs and the Historic Preservation Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

E. Public Participation

A notice of availability of the draft environmental assessment and land protection plan for the proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge was published in the *Federal Register* in May, 1990. It summarized the proposal, invited comments from the public, and gave pertinent dates and other information necessary for public review and comment on the proposal. Copies of the document were provided to federal, state, county, and local representatives, agencies and interest groups, including landowners.

Four written responses were received. They came from a private citizen, the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, the Mississippi State Office of The Nature Conservancy, and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. All were favorable for the establishment of the new Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge. The Nature Conservancy's letter included 46 letters they received from private citizens, all expressing their support for the proposal.

The letter from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks was answered separately. The Department was concerned about the possible loss of public hunting and trapping opportunities. In its reply, the Service reiterated its interest in providing hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities on new refuges that are being established. Service policy states that hunting is a valid recreational use and will be allowed when it does not interfere with the purpose for which the refuge was established. In Mississippi, public hunting programs are

provided on six of the seven established national wildlife refuges. Some delays in providing these programs may occur, however, when sufficient property has not yet been acquired to provide access or other needs essential for public use.

II. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This section outlines and evaluates three alternative proposals for the protection of approximately 11,600 acres of wildlife habitat in Bolivar County, Mississippi. The three alternatives are technically and economically feasible. They are:

- Alternative 1 : No Action
- Alternative 2 : FWS Protection and Management
- Alternative 3 : Protection and Management by Others

Alternative 2 is the preferred option for accomplishing the proposed action.

A. Alternative 1: No Action

This is the "status quo" alternative. Under this alternative, the Service would do nothing from an acquisition standpoint to protect or restore the wetlands and associated habitats at Dahomey. The lands would remain in private ownership, with intensive agriculture being the primary land use. The 9,272.5-acre tract owned by The Nature Conservancy would continue to be protected for its wildlife values.

Protection of the remaining wildlife habitat and resource values would be left to existing federal, state, and local regulatory authorities and the discretion of the individual landowners.

B. Alternative 2: Protection and Management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Preferred Alternative)

The Service proposes to protect and manage approximately 11,600 acres of bottomland hardwoods and other wetland habitats for wintering waterfowl in Bolivar County, Mississippi, through the establishment of a national wildlife refuge.

Under this alternative, the Service would purchase sufficient interest in the identified lands to prevent conflicting land uses and to provide the management flexibility required to manipulate the habitat as a wildlife refuge. The acquisition methods that could be used by the Service under this alternative are described below.

1. Leases and Cooperative Agreements

Potentially, the Service can preserve and manage a portion of the area's habitat through leases and/or cooperative agreements. Management control of privately owned lands could be obtained by entering into long-term renewable

leases with the landowners. Management authority for other privately owned lands could be secured through cooperative agreements.

2. Conservation Easements

Conservation easements on lands in the project area would give the Service the right to manage the area for waterfowl and other wildlife. This management would preclude all other uses that would be incompatible with the Service's management objectives. Only land uses that would have minimal or no conflicts with the management objectives would be retained by the landowners. In effect, the landowners would transfer certain development rights to the Service for management purposes as specified in the easement.

Easements would likely be useful when (1) most, but not all, of a private landowner's uses are compatible with the Service's management objectives, and (2) the current owner desires to retain ownership of the land and continue compatible uses under the terms set by the Service in the easement.

Land uses that are normally restricted under the terms of a conservation easement include:

- Development rights (agricultural);
- Alteration of the natural topography;
- Uses affecting the maintenance of floral and faunal communities;
- Excessive public access and use; and
- Alteration of the natural water regime.

3. Fee Title Acquisition

A fee title interest is normally acquired when (1) the fish and wildlife resources require permanent protection not otherwise assured, (2) land is needed for visitor use development, (3) the proposed land use could adversely impact the area's resources, or (4) when it would be the most practical and economical way to assemble small tracts into viable parcels for resource management. Fee title transfers all acquired ownership rights to the federal government and provides the best assurance of long-term resource protection and visitor use development. A fee title interest may be acquired by donation, exchange, or purchase.

C. Alternative 3: Protection and Management by Others

Under this alternative, the Service would rely on other federal, state, or private agencies and organizations to protect and manage the lands in the proposed refuge area.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks manages a system of game management areas, waterfowl management areas, lakes, and parks. These areas provide a wide range of outdoor opportunities while being managed for enhancement of fish and wildlife resources. The Department currently has one state management area in Bolivar County. While the proposed refuge area could qualify for acquisition as a state management area, the Department's funds are limited for a purchase of this size.

The Nature Conservancy is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation of natural communities, biological diversity, and representative ecological areas for scientific and educational purposes. The Conservancy owns and manages over 1,100 sanctuaries nationwide. The Conservancy often purchases tracts of land and holds them for government and other conservation agencies until funds become available for their purchase. Ownership is then transferred to the purchasing agency for management. In 1990, the Conservancy purchased a 9,272.5-acre tract within the proposed refuge area and has shown an interest in selling it to the Service.

No other federal or state agencies and conservation organizations have expressed an interest in protecting and managing the lands in the project area.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section discusses the area's natural and socioeconomic environment that would be affected by the implementation of the proposed action. A contaminant evaluation completed by the Service on March 12, 1991, found no contaminants or potential contaminant effects in the proposed area.

A. General

The proposed area contains approximately 8,500 acres of bottomland hardwoods, making it the largest remaining bottomland forest in the northern delta of the Mississippi River. The area also contains 1,480 acres of croplands in the interior of the bottomland hardwoods.



Rice field on interior of Dahomey Plantation

The Bogue Phalia River borders the proposed area on the east and forms the major drainage system of the area. Its tributaries, Belman Bayou, Stokes Bayou, Stillwater Bayou and Christmas Lake Branch, traverse within the area's proposed boundaries (Figure 1). When the Bogue Phalia cannot drain into the Sunflower River due to high water, these tributaries back up and overflow throughout the proposed area. These low areas (at 130 feet mean sea level and below) have a flood frequency of one to three years.

Bolivar County has a humid, warm, continental climate characteristic of the southeastern United States. Its average rainfall approaches 50 inches per year. Its average annual temperature is 64 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter temperatures occasionally fall below zero, but the average is around 47.

The soils are generally hydric in nature. Sharkey clays predominate, but some Dundee soils are also present. The topography is similar to that of the larger Mississippi River floodplain, ranging from level in the flat areas of the slackwater clays to gently undulating in the successions of ridges and swales that once bordered the river channel. This flat topography contributes to the area's slow drainage and periodic flooding.



Moist soil depression area

B. Vegetation and Land Use

Although the woodlands have been cut over since the late 1960s, the species composition remains diverse. The primary overstory species of the bottomland hardwoods are Nuttall oak, water oak, and overcup oak. Other species present include green ash, bitter pecan, sweet pecan, cherrybark oak, bald cypress, hackberry, red maple, rock elm, persimmon, sweetgum, black willow, and American elm.

Agriculture and timber production are the primary land uses. Interspersed among the bottomland hardwoods are beaver ponds, wooded sloughs, a shrub swamp, and croplands. The croplands on the interior of the bottomland hardwood tract are managed on a rice/soybean rotation. Approximately three-fourths of the cleared land is cultivated.

The shrub swamp is about 100 acres in size and is vegetated primarily by buttonbush, smartweed, and water primrose. It is considered to be a permanent water area since it serves as a reservoir for rice field dewatering during the dry summer months. During the other times of the year, rainfall is sufficient to maintain shallow water in the swamp.



Bottomland hardwoods

C. Wildlife Resources

The 8,500 acres of woodlands, the largest contiguous bottomland hardwoods tract in this part of the delta, is valuable to many forms of wildlife.

Waterfowl. In Bolivar County, mid-winter waterfowl surveys are conducted on the Mississippi River oxbow lakes and local catfish ponds. However, no waterfowl survey data are available for Dahomey Plantation. This lack of survey data reflects the economic and agricultural interests of the previous owner. Few rice fields in Bolivar County are flooded for wintering waterfowl, so waterfowl use is limited to periods when the woodlands and fields hold water from winter rains or backwater flooding.

Other Birds. The rice and bean fields and adjacent woodlands offer feeding and resting habitat for many species of shorebirds and raptors. Wading birds are abundant. Species regularly observed include cattle egrets, snowy egrets, great egrets, green herons, little blue herons, and great blue herons. The large wooded tract bordering the agricultural lands provides food and shelter for a large variety and number of songbirds.

Game birds include wild turkey, bobwhite quail, mourning dove, and American woodcock. The bottomland hardwoods support a core population of turkey. Doves are observed in great abundance feeding along the roadsides, in grain

fields, or perching on electric lines. Quail are common in the fallow fields, and the woodcock is a regular winter visitor.

Endangered Species. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons use the proposed refuge area during the winter.

Mammals. Deer, squirrel, and rabbit are the primary game species. Bobcat, coyote, mink, beaver, raccoon, and otter are the primary furbearers.



Shrub swamp

D. Fishery Resources

The area's fishery is limited to the tributaries of the Bogue Phalia -- Belman Bayou, Stokes Bayou, and Stillwater Bayou. These are small streams that support limited populations of sunfish, catfish, and gar.

E. Socioeconomic Considerations

The proposed refuge area, located in the upper Mississippi Delta, traditionally has been valued as farmland and more recently for timber production. Both uses have been subject to variations dependent on market conditions and commodity prices. The area has also been important for hunting.

The area's establishment as a refuge by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would not cause any significant land use changes. The woodlands would continue to be managed as bottomland hardwood habitat. Most of the cleared areas would

continue to be farmed under cooperative agreements with local farmers for rice and soybean production.

Deer are abundant and until April, 1990, a local hunting club had leased much of the proposed area for deer hunting. This organization, known as the Benoit Hunting Club, had been in existence for many years and had about 250 members. The Service would allow hunting on the proposed refuge providing it does not conflict with the primary objectives for which the refuge would be established. Six of the seven established national wildlife refuges in Mississippi have hunting programs.

In addition, the proposed refuge would bring increased tourism and increased local purchases of goods and services. Revenue generated by the refuge would include annual revenue-sharing payments of approximately \$70,000 to Bolivar County.

F. Cultural Resources

According to information provided by the State of Mississippi Department of Archives and History, one archeological site is located within the proposed refuge area. At this time no detailed information is available on this site, an Indian mound recorded as 22Bo564 in the state site files. Two other Indian mounds are located outside the proposed refuge boundary, according to United States Geological Survey topographic maps. One is southwest of Mound City to the north of the proposed area, and the other is located west of the area, south of Route 446 and east of Route 1.

Although not much information is available on cultural resources within the proposal area, any archeological sites discovered would be protected under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. This Act requires federal agencies to identify and evaluate the significance of cultural resources prior to the initiation of any project or activity that might affect those resources. Land acquisition alone will not negatively impact the area's cultural resources; in most cases, more protection would be provided to sites under federal ownership than would be afforded under private ownership. Future development and management plans for the refuge will be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office.



Acorn mast

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section analyzes and discusses the potential environmental impacts of the three management alternatives described in Section II.

A. Alternative 1: No Action

Under this alternative, the project area would remain in private ownership, with agriculture and timber production being the primary land uses. Maintenance of drainage systems would remain a high priority by landowners to ensure maximum farming opportunities. Waterfowl use would be minimal and would be limited to those areas and times when rainfall and natural flooding produce desirable habitat conditions. Generally speaking, the natural wildlife values of the area are likely to diminish as the intensity of farming increases.

Future habitat protection available under existing laws and regulations would be insufficient to prevent significant degradation of the remaining resource values. The primary deterrent against the loss of resource values is the Army Corps of Engineers' Section 404 permit program, which is administered under the authority of the Water Pollution Control Act. This program requires permits for any type of work in wetlands that would impact their functions, especially use by wildlife. The majority of the proposed area falls under this program. In addition, the Mississippi

Department of Natural Resources has regulatory authority over any activities that would violate the state's water quality standards.

However, there is no assurance that the protection offered by these regulatory programs would be permanent. The regulatory programs and their laws are subject to changes and varying definitions and interpretations, often to the detriment of wetlands. In addition, regulatory agencies must determine whether the issuance of permits would be in the overall public interest. Fish and wildlife conservation is only one of several public interest factors considered in permit issuance decisions. If fish and wildlife conservation is outweighed by other factors, permits that could adversely alter the wetlands in the project area could be issued.

One primary threat to the proposed area is the clearing of bottomland hardwoods for additional agricultural production. In the late 1960s, portions of the woodlands were heavily cut over, with the intent to convert them into croplands. Full conversion never materialized, but the threat continues. Similar areas in the northern delta have been cleared and converted to agricultural use.

Another threat is reduced aquifer recharge. The water table in this part of the delta experiences a tremendous drain from extensive pumping, Corps of Engineers' projects, and the general loss of wetlands. Streams in the area are heavily used for irrigation by rice farmers. A drought in 1989 led the Mississippi Department of Natural Resources to put a closure order on pumping from several streams in Bolivar County.

Under continued private ownership, land development activities associated with an increase in intensive farming would also have the potential to adversely affect cultural resource sites not yet detected. An Indian mound is known to be present in the Dahomey area. Clearing of additional bottomland hardwoods could impact such sites through soil disturbance and erosion. In addition, the effects of a lower water table could cause deterioration of organic materials that may be currently preserved in buried sites.

Based on the preceding discussion, it is concluded that the desired land protection objectives cannot be properly achieved under this alternative. Under the "No Action" alternative, the potential of this area to provide valuable wintering waterfowl habitat would not be realized. Site degradation from man-induced and natural sources would, in time, lessen the value of the area for fish and wildlife.



County-maintained access road

B. Alternative 2: Protection and Management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Preferred Alternative)

Under this alternative, the Service would purchase sufficient interest in the Dahomey Plantation and its adjacent lands to establish the area as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This would allow the Service to actively manage the area for wildlife, particularly wintering waterfowl.

No landowner within the project area will be obligated to sell his/her land to the Service. In accordance with current Service policy, all real estate transactions will be made with landowners who are willing to sell their land or enter into a conservation easement or other agreement.

Dahomey Plantation has been identified as one of the top five acquisition sites needed in Mississippi to help meet the habitat conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Broadly speaking, the surrounding Mississippi Delta region has experienced wide-scale habitat loss, and the Dahomey Plantation represents the last remaining woodlands of significance in the northern delta.

The proposed refuge would complement the other established Mississippi Flyway refuges by filling a geographic void and by providing additional wetland habitat for the Mississippi Valley population of Canada geese. Located in Bolivar County, the

largest rice-producing county in Mississippi, the proposed area could also become a cornerstone for several Farmers Home Administration tracts that have been identified for transfer to the Service.

If established, Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge would be a natural stopover for Canada geese traveling from the more northern refuges to Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge and other refuges to the south. Due to Dahomey's close proximity to the Mississippi River, migratory waterfowl would be expected to begin utilizing the refuge as soon as management commences. An estimated 50,000 to 75,000 ducks would winter in the proposed area.

The proposed area has the complex integration of wetlands (forests, agricultural wetlands, moist soil areas) needed to fully meet the wintering needs of migrating waterfowl. Its potential for greentree reservoir development and agricultural field water retention through the use of deep wells and relift pumps is excellent. The interior streams can also be managed to provide additional water. The project area lends itself readily to the development of these programs, as it currently has a system of roads, ditches, water wells, and pumps that will facilitate implementation of a fish and wildlife management plan.

Acquisition, enhancement, and management of the proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge by the Service could offer, where compatible with refuge objectives, the following recreational opportunities: hunting and trapping, as well as nonconsumptive activities such as bird watching, nature photography, wildlife observation, and environmental education and interpretation. The tourism emerging from these activities would also generate increased purchases of goods and services in the surrounding local communities.

In addition, all cultural resource sites which may be present would be protected under the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and other federal statutes. The proposed management of the area would involve protection of the lands in a natural state, preserving the bottomland hardwoods and maintaining the present farm areas in agriculture. The State Historic Preservation Office would be contacted when future management activities have the potential to affect cultural resources.

Finally, all tracts acquired by the Service in fee title will essentially be removed from real estate tax rolls because federal government agencies do not pay state or local taxes. In many localities, this loss of revenue can be substantial, creating a financial burden for the local government. Therefore, Public Law 95-469, commonly referred to as the Revenue Sharing Act, requires the Service to make payments to the local government in lieu of real estate taxes. The estimated annual revenue-sharing cost which would be paid to Bolivar County for the proposed refuge area is about \$70,000.



Dahomey woods

C. Alternative 3: Protection and Management by Others

Under this alternative, the Service would rely on other state or federal agencies or conservation organizations to acquire and manage the lands within the project area.

Dahomey would complement the existing management areas and programs of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. However, unless the landowners donate a significant portion of the area, the high estimated cost for acquisition (approximately \$9.2 million) would preclude the Department, with its limited land acquisition budget, from acquiring the property. No other state and federal agencies have expressed an interest in acquiring and managing the area.

The Nature Conservancy currently owns 9,272.5 acres within the project area and is willing to sell it to the Service. Permanent ownership and management of the area by the Conservancy is unlikely, as the Conservancy usually holds such lands for eventual resale to government and private conservation agencies that have the expertise and means to manage them.

Overall, acquisition and management of the project area by other federal and state agencies and conservation organizations appears unlikely, except for The Nature Conservancy under the conditions described above. If the Conservancy does retain ownership, the consequences would be close to the preferred alternative, except less emphasis would be placed on waterfowl management and it is unlikely

that consumptive uses would be allowed. If no state or federal agency acquires the property, the environmental consequences would be the same as the no action alternative.

Table 1 compares the environmental consequences of all three alternatives.

Table 1. Comparison of environmental consequences of each alternative.

	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Protection and Management by FWS (Preferred)	Alternative 3 Protection and Management by Others
Ducks	-	+	+
Geese	o	+	+
Wading Birds	o	+	+
Fisheries	o	+	o
Agriculture	+	-	-
Woodlands	-	+	+
Cultural Resources	-	+	+
Recreation	o	+	+
Endangered Species	o	+	+
Fish & Wildlife Habitat Quality	-	+	+
Habitat Diversity	-	+	+

- = decrease

+

o = no change

V. INFORMATION ON PREPARERS

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Final Land Protection Plan

Proposed Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

Bolivar County, Mississippi

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Regional Office
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

May 1991

United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast Region



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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, the Service) proposes to establish Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in Bolivar County, Mississippi. The new refuge would preserve valuable wintering habitat for mallards, pintails, blue- and green-winged teal, and wood ducks. It would also provide breeding habitat for resident wood ducks and would help meet the habitat conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The area is identified in the Plan as one of the top five habitat acquisition sites in Mississippi.

The proposed refuge encompasses about 11,600 acres and is located approximately 20 miles northeast of Greenville and 10 miles southwest of Cleveland (Figure 1). The nearest town is Benoit, 5 miles to the southwest. The Mississippi River is about 8 miles northwest. Mathews Brake National Wildlife Refuge is 45 miles southeast, and the Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge is 50 miles east (Figure 2). About 8,500 acres of the proposed area is bottomland hardwood habitat. It is subject to natural flooding and has a three-year flood frequency.

II. THREATS TO AND STATUS OF THE RESOURCE

The predominant land uses in the area are timber production and agriculture. A primary threat to the proposed area is the clearing of bottomland hardwoods for additional agricultural production. In the late 1960s, portions of the woodlands were heavily cut over with the intent to convert them into croplands. This conversion never materialized, but the threat is still present. Similar areas in the northern delta have been cleared and converted to agricultural use.

Another threat is reduced aquifer recharge. The water table in this part of the delta experiences a tremendous drain from extensive pumping, Army Corps of Engineers' projects, and the general loss of wetlands. Streams in the area are heavily used for irrigation by rice farmers. A drought in 1989 led the Mississippi Department of Natural Resources to put a closure order on pumping from several streams in Bolivar County.

III. PROPOSED ACTION AND OBJECTIVES

The proposed area has been identified as one of the five highest priority sites in Mississippi needed to help meet the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Since colonial times, the State of Mississippi has lost an estimated 59 percent of its wetlands, or about four million acres. The Dahomey Plantation represents the last remaining woodlands of important significance in the northern delta. The proposed refuge would complement the other established refuges in the northern delta area by filling a geographic void and by providing a mix of bottomland hardwoods and moist soil complexes needed for wintering waterfowl. Located in Bolivar County, the largest rice-producing county in Mississippi, the proposed area could also become a cornerstone for several Farmers Home Administration tracts that may be transferred to the Service. In addition, it could become an important link in restoration activities for the Mississippi Valley population of Canada geese.

DAHOMEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

UNITED STATES
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



U. S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

MISSISSIPPI

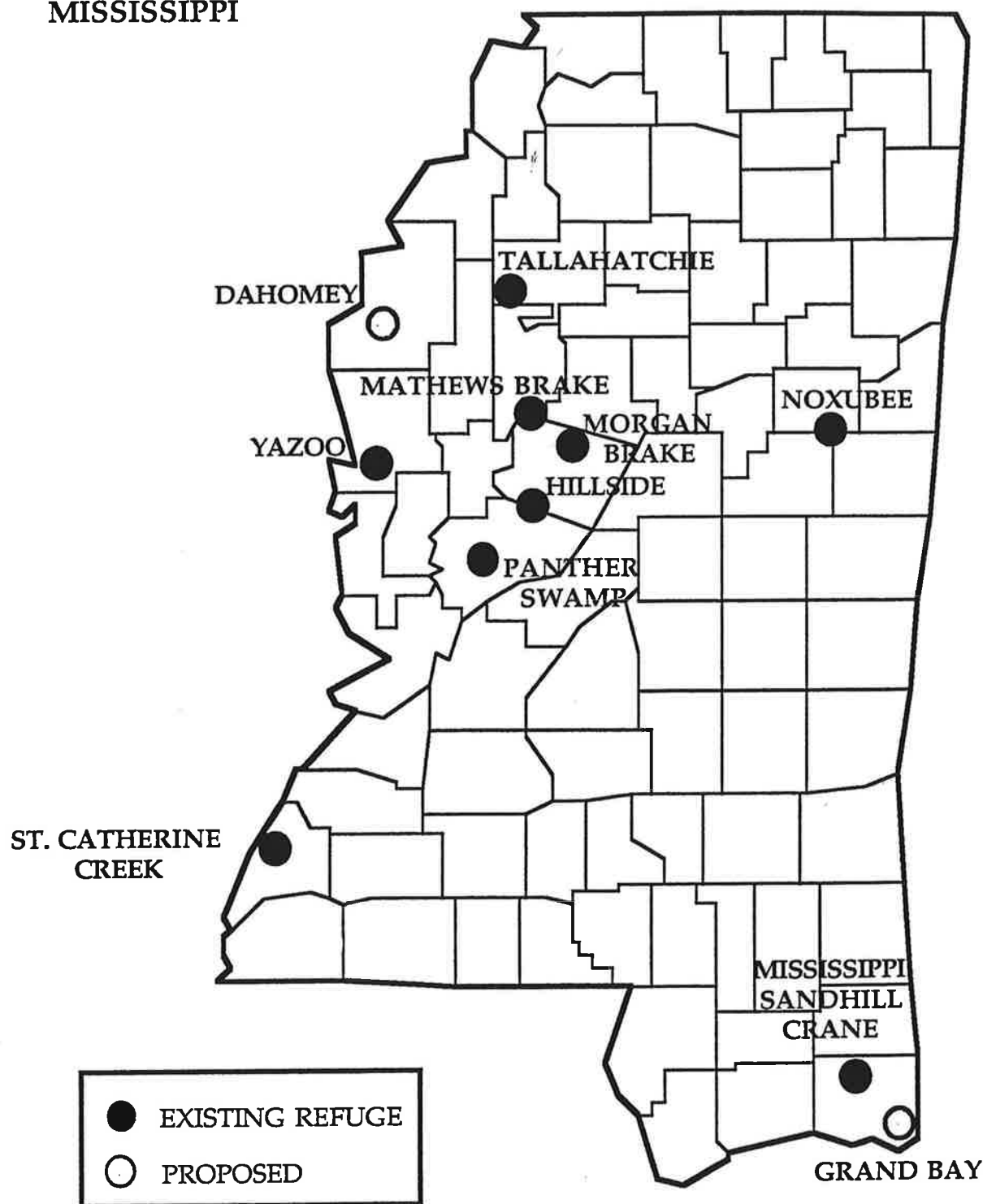


Figure 2. Location of proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in relation to other refuges in Mississippi.

The proposed refuge has the complex integration of wetlands (forests, agricultural wetlands, moist soil areas) needed to fully meet the wintering needs of migrating waterfowl. Its water management potential is good, as several deep wells and relift pumps are included within the area and the interior streams can be managed to provide additional water. The project area lends itself readily to the development of these programs, as it currently has a system of roads, ditches, water wells, and pumps that will facilitate implementation of a fish and wildlife management plan.

Acquisition, enhancement, and management of the proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge by the Service could offer, where compatible with refuge objectives, the following recreational opportunities: hunting and trapping, as well as nonconsumptive activities such as bird watching, nature photography, wildlife observation, and environmental education and interpretation.

IV. PROTECTION ALTERNATIVES

A. Alternative 1: No Action

Under this alternative, the project area would remain in private ownership, with agriculture and timber production being the primary land uses. Maintenance of drainage systems would remain a high priority to ensure maximum farming opportunities. Waterfowl use would be minimal and would be limited to those areas and times when rainfall and natural flooding produce desirable habitat conditions. The natural wildlife values of the area would diminish as the intensity of farming increases.

B. Alternative 2: Protection and Management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Preferred Alternative)

The preferred alternative would protect and manage the proposed area as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It would allow the Service to actively manage the area for wildlife, particularly wintering waterfowl.

Under this alternative, the Service would purchase sufficient interest in the project area to prevent conflicting land uses and to provide the management flexibility required to manipulate the habitat as a wildlife refuge. All real estate transactions would be made with landowners who are willing to sell their land or enter into a conservation easement or other agreement.

The acquisition methods that could be used by the Service under this alternative are described as follows:

1. Leases and Cooperative Agreements

Potentially, the Service can preserve and manage a portion of the area's habitat through leases and/or cooperative agreements. Management control of privately owned lands would be obtained by entering into long-term renewable leases with landowners. Management authority of other privately owned lands

could be secured through cooperative agreements. Short-term leases can be used to protect or manage habitat until more secure land protection can be negotiated.

2. Conservation Easements

Conservation easements on lands in the project area would give the Service the right to manage the area for waterfowl and other wildlife. This management would preclude all other uses that would be incompatible with the Service's management objectives. Only land uses that would have minimal or no conflicts with the management objectives would be retained by the landowners. In effect, the landowners would transfer certain development rights to the Service for management purposes as specified in the easement.

Easements would likely be useful when (1) most, but not all, of a private landowner's uses are compatible with the Service's management objectives, and (2) the current owner desires to retain ownership of the land and continue compatible uses under the terms set by the Service in the easement.

Land uses that are normally restricted under the terms of a conservation easement include:

- Development rights (agricultural);
- Alteration of the natural topography;
- Uses affecting the maintenance of floral and faunal communities;
- Excessive public access and use; and
- Alteration of the natural water regime.

3. Fee Title Acquisition

A fee title interest is normally acquired when (1) the area's resources require permanent protection not otherwise assured, (2) land is needed for visitor use development, (3) the proposed land use could adversely impact the area's resources, or (4) when it would be the most practical way to assemble small tracts into viable parcels for resource management.

Fee title transfers all acquired ownership rights to the federal government and provides the best assurance of long-term resource protection and visitor use development. A fee title interest may be acquired by donation, exchange, or purchase, and will be negotiated with willing sellers only. It is anticipated that fee title purchases will be the primary means of acquiring the lands within the proposed area.

C. Alternative 3: Protection and Management by Others

Under this alternative, the Service would rely on other state or federal agencies or conservation organizations to acquire and manage the lands within the project area.

Dahomey Plantation would complement the existing management areas and programs of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. However, unless the landowners donate a significant portion of the area, the cost of acquisition (approximately \$9.2 million) would preclude the Department, with its limited land acquisition budget, from acquiring the property.

The Nature Conservancy currently owns 9,272.5 acres within the project area. Permanent ownership and management of the area by the Conservancy is unlikely, however. The Conservancy usually holds such lands for eventual resale to government and private conservation agencies that have the expertise and means to manage them.

No other state or federal agencies and conservation organizations have expressed an interest in acquiring and managing the project area.

V. ACQUISITION ALTERNATIVES

The Service proposes to acquire approximately 11,600 acres of bottomland hardwoods and other wetland habitats in Bolivar County, Mississippi, for the establishment of a national wildlife refuge. The Service seeks to protect and manage these lands as habitat for a variety of wildlife, with special emphasis on migratory and residential waterfowl. The Service proposes to acquire these lands using funds appropriated under the Land and Water Conservation Act or the Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

It is the policy of the Service to acquire areas only from willing sellers under general authorities such as the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, and the Emergency Wetland Resources Act. Landowners within the project boundary who do not wish to sell their property are under no obligation to enter into negotiations or sell to the Service.

In addition, the Service, like other federal agencies, has been given the power of eminent domain, which allows the use of condemnation to acquire lands and other interest in lands for the public good. This power, however is seldom used. The Service usually acquires land from willing sellers and is not often compelled to buy specific habitats within a rigid timeframe. The Service's policy is to acquire land through condemnation only in order to:

- Determine the legal owner (clear titles);

- Settle a difference of opinion of value;
- Prevent use which would cause irreparable damage to the resources for which the unit (refuge, etc.) was established; or
- Consolidate federal ownership to effectively manage or develop the unit.

In all cases, whether or not condemnation is necessary, the Service is required by law to offer 100 percent of fair market value as determined by an approved appraisal that meets professional standards and federal requirements.

Other acquisition alternatives that could be employed by the Service include donations, partial donations, transfers, or exchanges. The Service will consider the use of any or all of these alternatives if they become available.

VI. COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

The Service has closely coordinated the development of this proposal with representatives of the Allen Gray Estate and The Nature Conservancy. Bolivar County officials and planners have also been involved and consulted. The State of Mississippi strongly supports the proposed action, as does the majority of the local public. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks and Ducks Unlimited, Inc., are also highly supportive of the proposed refuge.

VII. SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS

In the vicinity of the proposed refuge, farming is the traditional means of livelihood and outdoor wildlife-oriented recreation has been the preferred pastime of most local residents. Service acquisition and creation of the refuge would provide public opportunities for various types of outdoor recreation, which would also increase the visitation to the immediate area. Activities such as hunting and trapping would be provided on the proposed refuge whenever they are compatible with the primary objectives for which the refuge is being established.

If acquired, there would be no significant land use changes. The Service may employ several wetland management techniques, including periodic flooding, to enhance the area for waterfowl. The woodlands would continue to be managed as bottomland hardwood habitat, with emphasis on healthy mast-producing trees and winter flooding capabilities for waterfowl use. Some portions of the cleared areas would continue to be farmed under cooperative agreements with local farmers for rice and soybean production. Other open lands would be managed to encourage moist soil plants for waterfowl and other wildlife use. Such strategies would not impact neighboring landowners.

VIII. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

As previously described, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to protect approximately 11,600 acres of wildlife habitat in Bolivar County, Mississippi, through fee title purchases or less-than-fee title interest (conservation easements, cooperative agreements) from willing sellers. Table 1 and Figure 3 summarize the protection priorities and proposed methods of acquisition. The Service believes these are the minimum interests necessary to preserve the waterfowl and other wildlife habitat for the proposed refuge.

The property has been prioritized for acquisition using the following criteria:

- Biological significance;
- Existing and potential threats;
- Significance of the area to refuge management and administration; and
- Existing commitments to purchase or protect land.

Priority Group I

For lands within Priority Group I, fee title acquisition is the minimum proprietary interest necessary for the Service to successfully implement the desired management. Moreover, any acquisition at less-than-fee interest would not be cost-effective, since the cost of a conservation easement that provides the needed control would equal the cost of fee title acquisition.

The highest priority for land protection is the 9,272.5-acre Nature Conservancy property (formerly the Allen Gray Estate, Tracts 10, 10a, and 10b in Figure 3). These tracts form the core of the refuge proposal and contain a large shrub swamp that provides high quality waterfowl habitat. Tract 19 is also a key tract, as it contains the southern end of the shrub swamp. It should also be acquired in fee title, as the Service would need to control water levels in the entire shrub swamp to provide optimum management effectiveness for wildlife.

Tract 20 includes the main access point for the northern half of Tract 10. This 162-acre tract was recently acquired by the Mississippi State Highway Department for transfer to the Service.

Priority Group II

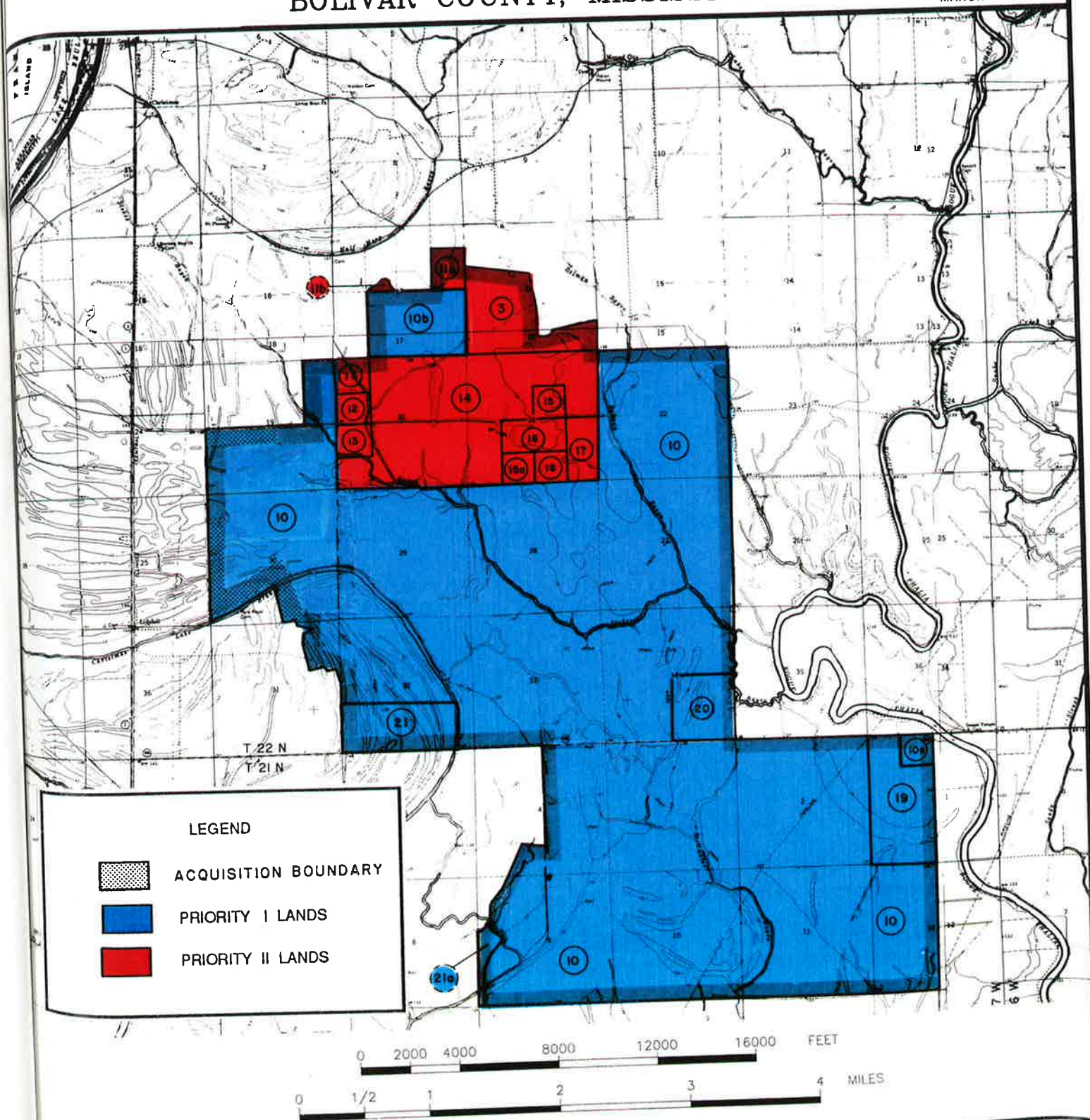
Fee title acquisition may be required on some of these tracts for management purposes; however, most of the resource values on these lands can be managed and protected through cooperative agreements, leases, or conservation easements with the landowners. These tracts are primarily agricultural lands north of Tract 10. Most of these fields have water management capability and could hold water during the waterfowl season.

Figure 3. Land acquisition priorities for the proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge.

DAHOMEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

LOCATED IN
BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

MARCH 1991



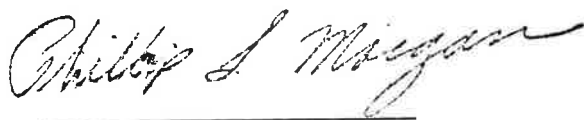
Land Acquisition Planning
Compliance Certificate

Project: Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

State: Mississippi

<u>Action:</u>	<u>Date</u>
Establishing the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County, Mississippi	
NEPA - Environmental Action Memorandum	<u>05/22/91</u>
E.O. 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs	<u>05/14/90</u>
E.O. 11988 Floodplain Management	<u>05/21/90</u>
E.O. 11990 Protection of Wetlands	<u>05/21/90</u>
Preliminary Engineering Report	<u>05/21/90</u>
Endangered Species Act, Section 7	<u>07/06/89</u>
Preliminary Contaminants Report	<u>03/29/91</u>
Coastal Zone Management Act, Section 307	<u>N/A</u>
E.O. 11593 Protection of Historic, Archeological, and Scientific Resources	<u>03/21/90</u>
Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Section 6, (CBRA)	<u>N/A</u>
P.L. 91-646 Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act	<u>05/01/90</u>

I hereby certify that all requirements of law, rules, Service policies or regulations applicable to preacquisition planning for the above project have been complied with.



Assistant Regional Director
Refuges and Wildlife

MAY 23 1991

Date

SECTION 7 EVALUATION

REGION: Southeast Region

LOCATION (ATTACH MAP): Bolivar County, Mississippi



89-271

LISTED SPECIES OR CRITICAL HABITAT CONSIDERED: Bald Eagle
Peregrine Falcon
Pondberry

NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: Acquisition and management of approximately 12,000 acres by the Fish and Wildlife Service as a National Wildlife Refuge.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION: To manage the subject lands for the perpetuation of resident and migratory waterfowl and other endemic wildlife species.

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT OF ACTION ON LISTED SPECIES OR CRITICAL HABITAT: The proposed action will enhance the property through implementation of management techniques by the FWS and perpetuation of wetlands.

RECOMMENDATION TO AVOID ANY IMPACTS: No adverse impacts anticipated.

SECTION 7 EVALUATION

PAGE 2

PROJECT LEADER

R. M. Dawson

DATE

7/3/89

COMMENTS:

WILL NOT AFFECT:

X

MAY AFFECT:

ating

ENDANGERED SPECIES SUPERVISOR:

Curtis B. James

DATE

7/6/89

COMMENTS:

Concur

WILL NOT AFFECT:

MAY AFFECT:

ARD-

DATE

COMMENTS:

WILL NOT AFFECT:

MAY AFFECT:

ARD-FA

DATE

COMMENTS:

WILL NOT AFFECT:

MAY AFFECT:

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

DATE

COMMENTS:

WILL NOT AFFECT:

BIOLOGICAL OPINION:

File

September, 1989

TNC ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS ASSESSMENT

SITE/TRACT: Dahomey Plantation
COUNTY/STATE: Bolivar County, MS
PREPARED BY: Mike Dawson (FWS) DATE: 12-8-89
REVIEWED BY: _____ DATE: _____

This form must be completed before The Nature Conservancy can acquire the land described above. Complete all sections. Use additional pages if necessary. Use "not applicable," "none," or other similar response as appropriate.

I. ON-SITE FIELD INSPECTION

Method of inspection (e.g., walked perimeter, inspected buildings, drove all passable roads; note dates/times property visited; identify all present during visits, including owner, TNC staff, others):

Drove all passable roads, walked interior areas, conducted aerial survey
5-13-88 ground survey - M. Dawson (FWS), Ray Aycock (FWS), Charles and
Ron Wilkes (brokers)
8-19-88 ground survey - M. Dawson, P. Charette (FWS), Charles & Ron Wilkes
8-2-89 ground survey - M. Dawson, B. Strader (FWS), P. Charette, R. Jones (TNC)
10/5/89 aerial survey - M. Dawson, Frank Boren (TNC)

Buildings, improvements, storage containers, underground tanks (describe and note any potential problems; e.g., PCBs, asbestos, chemicals, etc.):

No building improvements, etc. Rice farming operation includes 4 water
wells & pumps and 2 relift pumps. Other crops grown are soybeans and winter
wheat. No persistent chemical pesticides/herbicides in use.

Uses of adjacent property:

Rice or soybean farming.

Location of the following:

Sludge: N/A

Discolored or odorous soil: N/A

Dumping: N/A

Areas of stressed vegetation/absence of vegetation: N/A

Discolored, polluted, foul water (standing water, wells, wetlands): N/A

Unusual or noxious odors: N/A

Old pipes, electrical equipment, containers, barrels or stockpiles: N/A

Unusual or irregular depressions, mounds or hummocky ground surface: N/A

Other evidence of possible contamination: N/A

II. LAND USE HISTORY

Current owner/current use (e.g., undeveloped land, residential, manufacturing, agricultural, etc.):

Allen Gray Estate - timber management & agricultural production

Prior owners/prior use (indicate source of information):

1860's J.S. Richardson - mortgaged in 1893. Repossessed by Equitable Security Company in 1849. Conveyed to Dahomey Company in 1901. Sold to Allen Gray in 1903.

Known spills or release of chemicals, hazardous substances or fuels:

None

Government records reviewed (identify agency/person contacted, e.g., EPA, state agencies, building inspectors, fire departments, etc.):

Mississippi Department of Pollution Control - Rob Millette

Other materials reviewed (e.g., aerial photographs, previous environmental audits, other):

aerial photos

REALTY FEASIBILITY REPORT
FOR THE PROPOSED
DAHOMY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
IN
BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Pattern of Ownership

The proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge involves the fee title acquisition of approximately 12,000 acres. The major landowner within the proposed acquisition boundary, The Nature Conservancy, recently acquired 9,300 acres from the Allen Grey Estate. There are 17 additional ownerships within the selection area, ranging in size from 40 acres to 800 acres.

Cost

All realty information is being compiled, but all indications point to the estimated cost of acquisition to be approximately \$9.6 million, based on an average cost of \$800 per acre. Acquisition could be over a 5-year period.

Acquisition Possibilities

There is positive state-wide support for this project. Acquisition by donation, partial donation, or purchase of conservation easements will be attempted; however, it is anticipated that fee purchase will be the probable means of acquisition. There may be some local opposition, as this tract of woods is the only significant wildlife habitat left outside the Mississippi River levee, and the woods are presently leased to a local hunting club.

Refuge Revenue Sharing Data

The revenue sharing payments are estimated to be \$72,000. This is based on three fourths of one percent at an acquisition cost of \$9.6 million estimated fair market value.

Relocation

The only known improvement on the property is a hunting camp club house. Relocation costs are expected to be less than \$2,000.

Possible Impacts on Adjacent Landowners or Locality

There should be a favorable impact on the surrounding area. Since this is the largest wooded area outside the Mississippi River levee, preservation is important to the people.

Potential Acquisition Problems

There are no known problems involving the acquisition of this tract. The major landowner is very favorable to our acquisition of this property. The additional landowners that have been contacted have expressed a positive attitude regarding our acquisition.

Acquisition Authority

Acquisition of the refuge is authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j), as amended.

May 1, 1990
Date

Susana J. Vito
Senior Realty Officer
Herring

APPENDIX A

Planning/Funding Needs Assessment for the Proposed Dahomey NWR

Introduction

Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge is being proposed to preserve and manage wintering and migratory habitat for mallard, pintail, blue-winged teal, and wood duck, and production habitat for wood duck to help meet the habitat goals presented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Establishment of the refuge and proper management would provide an excellent wintering waterfowl refuge in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

The Dahomey proposal has been identified by the Mississippi Implementation Team of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture as one of the top acquisition sites in the Mississippi Delta.

Goals and Objectives

To provide habitat for the conservation and management of wildlife and natural resources.

To provide wintering habitat for up to 50,000 to 75,000 ducks,

To provide breeding/migratory habitat for nongame migratory birds.

To provide nesting habitat for wood ducks.

To provide wintering/migratory/breeding habitat for woodcock.

To provide opportunities for environmental education, interpretation, and wildlife-oriented recreation.

Acquisition Funding/Acreage

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level	Totals
Land Cost	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$9,000,000
Acreage	4,000	4,000	4,000	12,000
Ownership	1	1	5	7

Capital Equipment

The refuge will need equipment for moist soil management to construct, repair, and maintaining levees, and for routine "housekeeping" chores such as mowing grass, patrol work, wildlife surveys, etc. This would include the following items.

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level	Totals
Heavy duty farm tractor/disc	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
Bulldozer	\$ -	\$ -	\$125,000	\$125,000
Mowing tractor	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,000
Transport Truck and Trailer	\$ -	\$100,000	\$ -	\$100,000
Backhoe/Frontend loader	\$ -	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 35,000
Pick-up Trucks (8)	\$ 36,000(3)	\$ 36,000(3)	\$ 24,000(2)	\$ 96,000
Boat/Motor	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500
ATV's (5)	\$ 9,000(2)	\$ 9,000(2)	\$ 4,500(1)	\$ 22,500
Misc. other equipment	\$ 40,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$100,000
Total	\$121,500	\$210,000	\$263,500	\$550,000

Development/Construction

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level	Totals
Office	\$1,250,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$1,250,000
Maint. & Support Facilities	\$ -	\$ 750,000	\$ -	\$ 750,000
Levee Rehab	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
Road Rehab	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
Total	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$ 500,000	\$3,000,000

Planning Needs

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level	Totals
Cultural Resource Surveys	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$ 60,000
Master Planning	\$ -	\$ -	\$30,000	\$ 30,000
Public Use Plans	\$ -	\$10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Management Plans	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$ -	\$ 60,000
Total	\$55,000	\$65,000	\$40,000	\$160,000

Operations and Management

Intensive habitat and water management will be required for this refuge to accomplish resource objectives. Management cost however, will be significantly reduced by utilizing a cooperative farming program. Cooperative farming is expected to provide savings of \$65,000 to \$70,000 in operational expenses.

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level
Refuge Manager, GS-9/11	\$ 36,000	\$ 39,000	\$ 42,000
Asst. Refuge Manager GS-7/9	\$ -	\$ 31,000	\$ 33,000
Maint. Workers WG-8	\$ 36,000	\$ 39,000	\$ 42,000
Office Assistant GS-5	\$ 24,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 26,000
Equipment Operator WG-8	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$ 39,000
Biological Tech. GS-4/5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,000
Forester GS-9/11	\$ 36,000	\$ 39,000	\$ 42,000
Management Funds	\$ 30,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
Maintenance Funds	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Total	\$162,000	\$279,000	\$318,000

Summary of All Funding Needs

	Initial Operational Level	Intermediate Operational Level	Full Operational Level	Totals
Acquisition Cost	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$ 9,000,000
Capital Equipment	\$ 121,500	\$ 210,000	\$ 263,500	\$ 550,000
Development Const.	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 3,000,000
Planning	\$ 55,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 160,000
Total One-Time Cost	\$4,426,500	\$4,525,000	\$3,803,500	\$12,710,000
Annual Operations & Maint.	\$ 162,000	\$ 279,000	\$ 318,000	Annual

Don A. Gabriel 3/1/91
Associate Manager/Date

Approved:

Donald W. Benson 3/1/91
ARD-Refuges and Wildlife/Date

cc:

Associate Manager, RF-II

Don Adams

Carol Phillips

Deputy ARD, Refuges and Wildlife

Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Coordinator

PPP Notebook

Chief, Land Acquisition Branch

memorandum

PD-Mississippi

Dahomey NWR

Approvals-Compliance

DATE: April 13, 1990

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

Chief, Project Development Branch, FWS; Atlanta, GA

SUBJECT:

Compliance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990; Establishment of Dahomey NWR, Bolivar County, Mississippi

TO:

Files

I have considered the proposed action in light of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. I have determined that the acquisition of lands to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge will not adversely impact the refuge wetlands and floodplains.

If any of the refuge site plans should involve construction in or modification of the wetlands and floodplains, I recommend reconsideration of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 prior to the implementation of such development.



Charles R. Danner

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Approvals-Compliance

MEMO TO FILE

May 21, 1990

From: Chief, Project Development Branch, FWS, Atlanta, GA

Subject: Preliminary Engineering Report - Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County, Mississippi

The Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, proposes to acquire approximately 12,000 acres of valuable wetlands in Bolivar County, Mississippi, to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge.

No formal engineering assessment of the acquisition lands has been conducted to date. Project specific engineering and site planning will be accomplished when the nature and extent of refuge development has been determined (e.g., access roads, headquarters and administrative support facilities, quarters, public use facilities).



cc:
Engineering

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Approvals-Compliance

Date: May 21, 1990
From: Chief, Project Development Branch, FWS, Atlanta, GA
Subject: Compliance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990; Establishment of
Dahomey NWR, Bolivar County, Mississippi
To: Files

I have considered the proposed action in light of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. I have determined that the acquisition of lands to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge will not adversely impact the refuge wetlands and floodplains.

If any of the refuge site plans should involve construction in or modification of the wetlands and floodplains, I recommend reconsideration of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 prior to the implementation of such development.



MHL:May 21, 1990



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Approvals

MEMORANDUM

TO: US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
75 SPRING STREET, S.W.
ATLANTA GA 30303

DATE: May 14, 1990

FROM: STATE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: REVIEW COMMENTS — Activity:
FORM DI-711, INTERGOVERNMENTAL NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION,
WHICH DESCRIBES THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE'S PROPOSED
ACTION OF ESTABLISHING THE DAHOMEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
IN BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI.

State Application Identifier Number: MS900425-002

Location: BOLIVAR

Contact: JAMES W. PULLIAM JR

The State Clearinghouse, in cooperation with state agencies interested or possibly affected, has completed the review process for the activity described above.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS COMPLIANCE:

- () We are enclosing the comments received from the state agencies for your consideration and appropriate action. The remaining agencies involved in the review did not have comments or recommendations to offer at this time. A copy of this letter is to be attached to the application as evidence of compliance with Executive Order 12372 review requirements.
- () Conditional clearance pending Archives and History's approval.
- ☒ None of the state agencies involved in the review had comments or recommendations to offer at this time. This concludes the State Clearinghouse review, and we encourage appropriate action as soon as possible. A copy of this letter is to be attached to the application as evidence of compliance with Executive Order 12372 review requirements.
- () The review of this activity is being extended for a period not to exceed 60 days from the receipt of notification to allow adequate time for review.

COASTAL PROGRAM COMPLIANCE (Coastal area activities only):

- () The activity has been reviewed and complies with the Mississippi Coastal Program. A consistency certification is to be issued by the Bureau of Marine Resources in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act.
- () The activity has been reviewed and does not comply with the Mississippi Coastal Program.

cc: Funding Agency (As requested by applicant)

12372
WEEKLY LOG
N150

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

FD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Approvals

DATE 04/20/9
04/26/9

MS APPLICANT NO.: MS900425-002
IMPACT AREA(S): BOLIVAR

APPLICANT:
US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
75 SPRING STREET, S.W.
ATLANTA GA 30303

CONTACT: JAMES W. PULLIAM JR
PHONE: (000) 000-0000

FEDERAL AGENCY: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FUNDING: FEDERAL
LOCAL
TOTAL

APPLICANT
OTHER

STATE
PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION: FORM DI-711, INTERGOVERNMENTAL NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION,
WHICH DESCRIBES THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE'S PROPOSED
ACTION OF ESTABLISHING THE DAHOMEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
IN BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI.

5/15/90 CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER

421 WEST PASCAGOULA STREET - JACKSON, MS 39203 (601) 960-4282

- THIS IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ONLY -

STATE AGENCIES MUST REVIEW CERTAIN PROPOSALS PRIOR TO RECEIVING MISSISSIPPI INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS CLEARANCE. THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY REVIEWS ANY PROPOSALS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION, SUCH AS A HIGHWAY OR AN APARTMENT COMPLEX FOR COMPLIANCE WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION. MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, BUREAU OF POLLUTION CONTROL, REVIEWS APPLICATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT. THE BUREAU OF MARINE RESOURCES OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS REVIEWS APPLICATIONS FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE COASTAL PROGRAM.

IF APPLICATIONS ARE FOR PROJECTS OF LOCAL IMPACT, THEY SHOULD BE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AT THE SAME TIME. PLEASE NOTE THAT ONE OF OUR REQUIREMENTS IS THE USE OF STANDARD FORM 424. THE OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PREPARES AND DISTRIBUTES A WEEKLY LOG LISTING PERTINENT INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS FORM. OUR ADDRESS IS 421 WEST PASCAGOULA STREET 39203 AND OUR PHONE NUMBER IS 960-4280.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INTERGOVERNMENTAL NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION
(Use of this form is prescribed in 511 DM 3 and 50 CFR Part 4.4(b))

1. TO: (Insert multiple addresses if applicable)

Office of Federal State Programs
Department of Planning and Policy
500 High Street
1504 Walter Sillers Bldg.
Jackson, MS 39202

Mrs. Patricia Podriznik
Regional Historic Preservation Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
75 Spring St., SW, Room 1240
Atlanta, GA 30303

2. FROM: (Organization, address, city, state, ZIP code)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Refuges and Wildlife
Project Development Branch
75 Spring St., SW, Room 1240
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

The Department of the Interior organization listed in Item 2 above is planning to undertake the action identified in Items 3 through 7 below.

In accordance with Section 401 of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1963 and Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, we wish to assure that this Department of the Interior action is consistent or compatible with State, regional and local development plans and programs, and to permit State and local assessment of the project's environmental impact. This assessment

is requested as prescribed in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95, Revised, which provides for the evaluation, review, and coordination of Federal and federally assisted program and projects.

If you wish to initiate any discussion regarding this action, please contact us at the address shown in Item 2 above within 30 days of receipt of this notice.

Pursuant to Advisory Council procedures as detailed in 36 CFR Part 800.4(a)(1), we request that the

following information be provided to the Service: (1) known archeological, historic, and/or cultural properties within the study area; (2) whether these properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are eligible for listing; (3) information on any cultural resource surveys performed within the study area and an evaluation of the quality of these surveys; and (4) a recommendation on the need for cultural resource surveys, the type of survey needed (and survey methods) and recommendations on the boundaries of these surveys.

3. TYPE OF PROPOSED ACTION

DIRECT FEDERAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

LEASE

LICENSE

☒ ACQUISITION, USE OR DISPOSAL OF FEDERAL PROPERTY

4. APPROXIMATE DATE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN OR INITIATED

FY 1990

5. SITE LOCATION MAP ATTACHED

YES

☒

NO

6. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION:

The Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, proposes to acquire approximately 12,000 acres of valuable wetlands in Bolivar County, Mississippi to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge.

7. BENEFITS/IMPACTS

The refuge is being proposed to preserve wintering habitat for mallard, pintail, blue-winged teal, and wood duck; and production habitat for wood duck to help meet the habitat goals presented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Establishment of the refuge and proper management would provide excellent wintering waterfowl habitat and a needed waterfowl refuge in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

8. TITLE AND SIGNATURE

TELEPHONE NO.

10. DATE

April 17, 1990

Acting

Alvin L. Baul
404/331-3588

Regional Director



Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Historic Preservation Division • Post Office Box 571 • Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571
Telephone 601-354-7326

March 21, 1990

Ms. Patricia K. Podriznik
Regional Historic Preservation Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Podriznik:

RE: Proposed Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar County
Mississippi

Thank you for your March 14, 1990, correspondence relating to the above proposal. Enclosed for your reference are copies of our February 20, 1990, correspondence to the Nature Conservancy, Mississippi Field Office, in support of this plan.

Sincerely,

Roger G. Walker
Review and Compliance Officer

RGW/gp

Enclosures



Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Historic Preservation Division • Post Office Box 571 • Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571
Telephone 601-354-7326

February 20, 1990

Mr. Roger L. Jones, Jr., Director
The Nature Conservancy
Mississippi Field Office
P. O. Box 1028
Jackson, MS 39215-1028

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History endorses The Nature Conservancy acquisition of 9272.5 acres at Dahomey Plantation in Bolivar County, Mississippi. We understand the area is being acquired in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to eventually create a National Wildlife Refuge, as Land and Water Conservation Funds are made available.

We encourage members of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation to actively secure necessary funding during fiscal years 1991 and 1992 for repurchase of the property from The Nature Conservancy. In addition to providing protection for one of the last large bottomland hardwood forest stands in the northern Delta, and an outstanding wintering area for migratory waterfowl, Dahomey offers some outstanding outdoor recreational potential in an area where public lands are limited.

There is one recorded archaeological site (22Bo564, a mound) within the property boundaries. We have enclosed copies of material from our files relating to the historical significance of Dahomey.

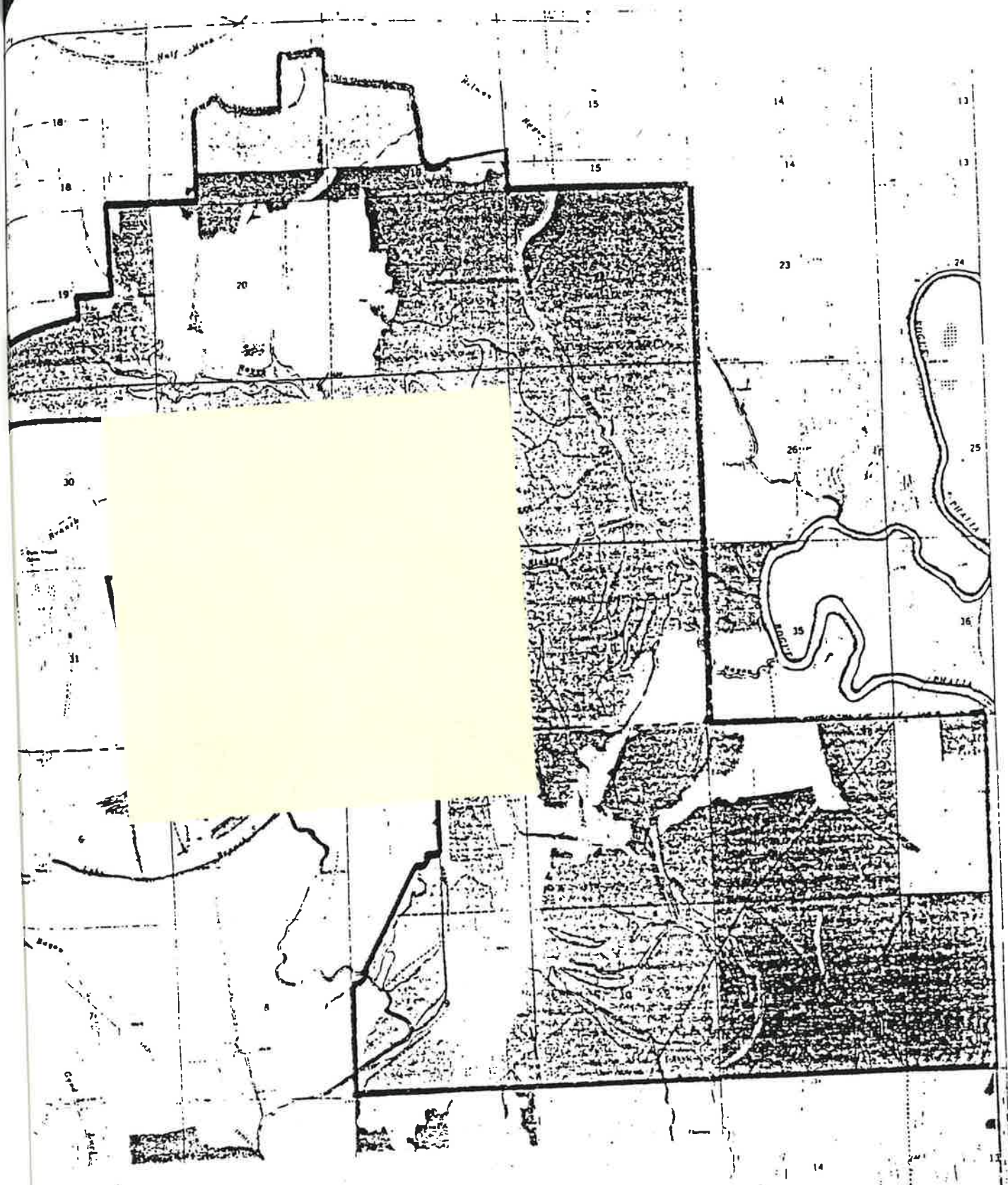
Sincerely,

Roger G. Walker
Review and Compliance Officer

RGW/gp

Enclosures

Figure 2. Selection Area



SR-7741

CITIES, TOWNS, COMMUNITIES

Page 1.

NAME DANCEY, 14 m. S. of Rosedale (a) MAILED FOR Plantation of Jim Richardson/
 Estate (b)
 FORMERLY KNOWN AS ✓ POPULATION 16 (1) ALT. 137 (4) DATE 1955 (1953)
 FORMED FROM ✓ MEANING OF NAME IF UNUSUAL ✓
 INCORPORATED (yes or no) NO (b) WHEN ✓ UNINCORPORATED WHEN ✓ IF EXTINCT
 EXTINCT SINCE ✓ COUNTY (indicate if county seat) Belivar County MAXIMUM
 ON Y. & N. V. (1) RAILROAD OR RAILROADS. ON ✓ RIVER. (c) ✓ LAKE
 ON # 1 (c) HIGHWAYS. ON Delta Transportation Co (a) BUS LINE OR LINES
 PERCENT OF POPULATION WHITE 5 NEGRO 95 FOREIGN ELEMENT (by name) ✓
 ACCOMMODATIONS (hotels, inns, tourist camps) ✓

NEWSPAPERS (name, editor, daily or weekly) ✓

MANUFACTURES, PLANTS, FACTORIES (names and location) ✓

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (existing or extinct) Public school for negroes called
Dancey School. (a) White children are transported by bus to Rosedale
Consolidated School. (c)

PARKS (municipal or privately owned) ✓

MUSEUMS ✓

LIBRARIES ✓

SUBJECT

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (name and location) _____

COMMUNITY HOUSES _____

EXPERIMENT STATIONS (name and location) _____

CHURCHES (by sect, name and location) 3 negro Churches--two Baptist, one Method
(e)

One Baptist Church is known as Storm's Chapel.

CEMETERIES (name and location) _____

(e)

GRAVE YARDS A negro burying ground near Storm's Chapel.

MONUMENTS (outstanding, whether in town or cemetery) _____

IMPORTANT PLACES (connected with history or development, by reason of having been birthplace of, or because of burial here.) (State why important, give name, present address if available, give this as briefly as possible.)

James Richardson, owner of the property in 1838, which now comprises the Allen Gray estate, was considered the largest individual cotton planter in the world. Mr. Richardson, who travelled extensively, spent a portion of his time on the plantation, which was then managed by Gus Gencit. R. S. Poe, who now leases the Danbury plantation, operates a store on the property. (c)

POINTS OF INTEREST IN THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS (historic homes, name, location, why of particular interest, Indian mounds whether these have been excavated, if so findings, period, state or national, in vicinity.) (Make this as brief as possible.)

BRIEF HISTORY OF TOWN (includes in this recurring events peculiar to town, geography and topography, geology, making the whole as brief as possible and consistent with the material available.)

On November 13, 1833, lands on this site were patented by the United States Government to F. G. Ellis. In 1837, F. G. Ellis conveyed these lands to Joseph Hugh; and, in 1856, Joseph Hugh conveyed to T. F. Daniel. (3)

This plantation-around which a settlement grew - finally became part of the holdings of Jim Richardson. In 1888, during the time that it was owned by Mr. Richardson, Gus Bencit was manager, and it was known as the largest cotton plantation in the world owned by an individual. (4) Mr. Richardson spent only a portion of his time on his plantation, spending a great deal of time traveling. (4)

Danomey Plantation, now a part of the Allen Gray Estate, is leased by W. S. Poe. Mr. Poe, in addition to his cotton-farming interests, runs the commissary on the place. The General manager of the entire Estate of Allen Gray is E. S. Kingsbury, of Evansville, Indiana, who has held this position for years. (b)

The postoffice at Danomey was discontinued in 1937, and mail is now received by rural route from Deulah, Miss. (e)

The land is loam and buckshot, and very fertile. (c)

SUBJECT FILE

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- (Example. Population--Rand McNally's Census 1930
 Formed--John L. Johnson, Chancery Clerk, Pontotoc, 1938
 Schools--Henry Smith, County Supt. of Education, Pontotoc County, Miss.
 Mrs. Annabelle L. Carr, (Deulah, Miss.)
- (1) Rand McNally Census- 1930-40
 - (2) Miss. State Geological Survey- 1925
 - (3) Chancery Records, Rosedale, Miss.
 - (4) History & Biographical Sketches, Colivar County, by Miss. Delta One D. A. R.
 - (5) Office Ms: May C. Wilson--worker.
 - (6) W. S. Poe. Danomey. Miss.

Page 1
100-Dahomey-Holivar County
F G
May S. Wilson
Atlas.

SUBJECT FILE

Dahomey is located 14 miles south of Rosedale, on Highway # 1 and the "Riverside" branch of the X & M V Railroad.

Its population is approximately 150, 95% of which is colored, and its elevation is 160 feet.

The nature of the soil is lean and buckshot and very fertile.

HISTORY. Dahomey is one of the small railroad stations and flag stops of the Allen Gray estate, a tract of land containing 80,000 acres.

It was originally a part of the Jim Richardson estate and was established in 1900. Though located only 3 miles from Lobdell, on the same plantation it too, has a postoffice.

W. S. Poe is lessee on this part of the estate, and lives upstairs over commissary and postoffice. He is Postmaster at Dahomey also.

Mr. Kingsbury is general manager of the entire estate.

There is only one store at Dahomey, a two-story building constructed of wood. There are 3 negro churches and a negro school.

TRANSPORTATION. There are two trains a day that pass through Dahomey; the Oliver and Grayhound bus lines pass through it.

INDUSTRIES. Agriculture is the only industry.

POINTS OF INTEREST. No points of interest nearer Dahomey than the Indian mound located near Lobdell, which has been located from that station.

(see paper on Lobdell).

SUBJECT FILE

Level I Survey
Contaminant Survey Checklist
of Proposed Real Estate Acquisitions

INSTRUCTIONS: Check for each category. Explain briefly where something other than "No", "None", or "Not Applicable" is checked. Discuss whether a Level II or III Survey will be recommended. Describe the distance if nearby is checked and whether there is a know potential pathway for contamination on site. Attach a legal description of the real estate property covered by this Survey.

A. Background Information

Bureau Name U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Site Name Dahomey NWR County Bolivar State MS

Date of Survey 3-12-91

B. Site Inspection Screen: On-site and nearby

	ONSITE	NEARBY	NONE
1. Dumps, especially with drums, containers (Read labels if possible; do not open or handle! If no labels, note identifying characteristics)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Other debris: household, farm, industrial waste	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Fills: possible cover for dumps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Unusual chemical odors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Storage tanks: petroleum products, pesticides, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Buildings: Chemical storage, equipment repair, solvents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Structures -- evidence of asbestos sprayed fire proofing, acoustical plaster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Vegetation different from surrounding for no apparent reason, e.g. bare ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. "Sterile" or modified water bodies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Oil seeps, stained ground, discolored stream banks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. Oil slicks on water, unusual colors in water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12. Spray operation base: air strip, equipment parking area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. Machinery repair areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14. Pipelines; major electrical equipment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Oiled or formerly oiled roads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Electric transmission lines: pole mounted transformers, pad mounted transformers -- evidence of leakage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

C. Record Searches (Coordinate with Realty, title search, others as appropriate.)

1. Past uses which might indicate potential problems of site (CIRCLE any that are applicable.)

Manufacturing, service stations, dry cleaning, air strip, pipelines, rail lines, facilities with large electrical transformers or pumping equipment, petroleum production, landfills, scrap metal, auto, or battery recycling, military, labs, wood preserving, other describe _____

None ☒

2. Nearby land uses, especially upstream or upgradient, or that might have had waste to dump at site (see list under Past Uses)
Identify: _____ None ☒

3. Known contaminant sites in vicinity:
NPL, state sites, candidate sites
(check with EPA; State EPA counterpart) Yes ___ No ☒

4. Interviews on past use: owners, neighbors,
County agents and any appropriate Federal
authorities: Problems? Yes ___ No ☒

5. Agricultural drainage history: surface,
subsurface drains. Yes ___ No ☒

D. A Federal agency has not made a certification under section
120(h) of CERCLA (Superfund).
Not Applicable ☒ Yes ___ No ___

E. A non-Federal entity has not made certification on the absence
of contaminants. Yes ___ No ☒

F. A Level II study is recommended. Yes ___ No ☒
A Level III study is recommended. Yes ___ No ___

G. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge no contaminants are present on this real estate,
and there are no obvious signs of any effects of contamination.

Signed R. M. Dawson

Print Name R. M. Dawson

Date 3-21-91

Title Project Development Biologist

On the basis of the information collected to complete this form it is possible to reasonably conclude that
there is a potential for contaminants, or the effects of contaminants, to be present on this real estate.

Signed _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Title _____

H. Approving Official

I concur with the above recommendation.

Signed James W. Pulliam, Jr.

Print Name James W. Pulliam, Jr.

Date 3/29/91

Title Regional Director

B.1. Two dumps were found in the woods. Neither had been used for several years and both contained remnants of household trash such as cans and bottles. No toxic or hazardous materials were present.

B.2. On the property owned by The Nature Conservancy, there are two mobile homes, one hunting cabin, two above ground storage tanks (one for natural gas and one for gasoline), and associated household trash. On the Malone tract, there is a large dilapidated hunting lodge, a meat processing shed, a small walk-in cooler, and associated household debris.

B.5. See B.2.

B.6. See B.2.

B.14. A Texas Eastern Gas pipeline crosses the southern half of the Conservancy property. This pipeline is well maintained and there have never been any contaminant problems.

memorandum

DATE: MAY 23 1991

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

ARD, Refuges and Wildlife, FWS, Atlanta, GA (ARW)

PD-Mississippi
Dahomey NWR
Approvals-Compliance

SUBJECT:

Approval Memorandum for the Establishment of Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge,
Bolivar County, Mississippi

TO:

Regional Director, FWS, Atlanta, GA

This memorandum is submitted for your approval to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge in Bolivar County, Mississippi.

The Southeast Region proposes to protect approximately 11,600 acres of bottomland hardwoods and associated wetlands in northwestern Mississippi, approximately twenty miles northeast of Greenville, Mississippi. It would provide important wintering habitat for waterfowl, particularly mallards, pintail, blue- and green-winged teal, and wood ducks. The project has been identified as one of the five highest priority acquisition sites in Mississippi, and would assist in fulfilling objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the associated Lower Mississippi River Joint Venture.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, this region prepared an Environmental Assessment for the proposal to evaluate three alternatives and their potential impacts on the project area. Alternative 2, protection and management by the Fish and Wildlife Service through fee title, cooperative agreements, and leases is the preferred alternative.

Based on documentation in the Environmental Assessment, you signed a Finding of No Significant Impact on May 22, 1991, for the establishment of the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge. All other documentation, procedures, laws, regulations, policy directives, and Executive Orders identified in 2 REM 2.11, Steps 4 and 5, have been considered during the planning of this acquisition proposal. The attached Land Acquisition Planning Compliance Certificate lists the required documentation and the associated completion date.

We respectfully request your approval to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge.



Attachments

Approved:


Regional Director5/28/91
Date

Land Acquisition Planning
Compliance Certificate

Project: Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

State: Mississippi

Action: Establishing the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge,
Bolivar County, Mississippi

Date

NEPA - Environmental Action Memorandum	<u>05/22/91</u>
E.O. 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs	<u>05/14/90</u>
E.O. 11988 Floodplain Management	<u>05/21/90</u>
E.O. 11990 Protection of Wetlands	<u>05/21/90</u>
Preliminary Engineering Report	<u>05/21/90</u>
Endangered Species Act, Section 7	<u>07/06/89</u>
Preliminary Contaminants Report	<u>03/29/91</u>
Coastal Zone Management Act, Section 307	<u>N/A</u>
E.O. 11593 Protection of Historic, Archeological, and Scientific Resources	<u>03/21/90</u>
Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Section 6, (CBRA)	<u>N/A</u>
P.L. 91-646 Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act	<u>05/01/90</u>

I hereby certify that all requirements of law, rules, Service policies or regulations applicable to preacquisition planning for the above project have been complied with.



Assistant Regional Director
Refuges and Wildlife

5/23/91
Date